

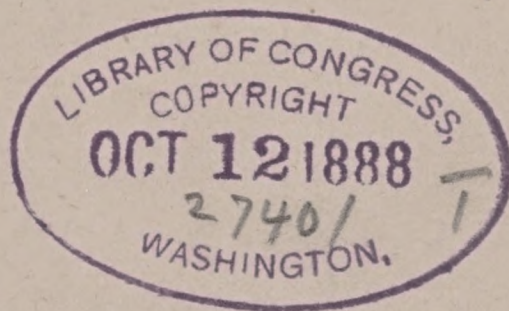
IN SAFE HANDS.

BY ✓

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AUTHOR OF "THROUGH THE WINTER," "ALONG THE OLD ROAD,"
"IN AFTER YEARS," "OUT OF THE SHADOW," ETC.

"Be silent to God, and let him mould thee."—*Martin Luther.*



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IN SAFE HANDS.

CHAPTER I.

ALL BUT—

“No prayer that was really earnest
Ever has lost its way ;
And none that asked for a blessing
Ever was answered, Nay.”

“PAPA !”

It was a little girl who spoke, and through the dingy, garret room her clear, young voice rang like a sweet-toned bell ; but the hard-working, care-worn man who heard it only started and said, nervously :

“Hush, don’t speak to me now, Joy ; I’ve all but got it.”

Little Joy Stanmore lingered for a moment near the table at which her father was working, and then, with a face very unlike her name, she stepped on tiptoe across the room to the window and, kneeling before it, rested her small hands on the broad sill, and looked out wistfully into the busy street.

It was one of November’s dreariest and most

sullen days. Gray clouds veiled the sky ; a fierce wind that, like the one famed in poetry, seemed to be out "for a madcap, galloping chase," was chilling the few pedestrians who were brave enough to be abroad, and blinding them with dust ; while, every now and then, to add to the gloom and discomfort, great feathery flakes of snow came whirling down.

There was nothing in the clouds and wintry aspect of the day to cheer a lonely child, and, with a sigh, Joy soon turned from the window, curled herself up in the only chair in the room that could, even by courtesy, be called comfortable—a wooden rocker, minus one arm—and tried to sleep. But though, like Dickens' Little Marchioness, she "made believe very hard" that she was sleepy, and even pressed her rebellious eyelids down with her fingers, her brown eyes would persist in opening, till at last she let them have their way. Then sitting up she folded her little hands meekly in her lap, and looked, with the gravity of a judge, around the forlorn room that for six years had been her only home.

It was in the fourth story of a tenement-house in a poor, though tolerably respectable, part of New York City. Poverty, like genius, has signs of its own that are unmistakable ; and poverty, more truly than oxygen, gave tone to the atmosphere of that miserable room. The furniture was scanty, old and broken ; the floor was bare ; the windows

were dingy with dust, and the wall was draped with cobwebs. In a poor old stove a handful of coals burned slowly, as if seeking from very pity to last as long as possible. There was not an article in the room which did not speak of want in language that could not be misunderstood; and, judging from the room, a stranger would have decided at once that its occupants were as worthless as their possessions.

A second glance, however, would have corrected that opinion, for the man who sat by the table, busy with pencil and paper, was evidently no ordinary man. He was miserably poor; and if to fail of success in one's chosen pursuit means the same as failure in life's highest aims, then, undeniably, those were right who pronounced that man's life a failure. But one skilled in detecting the soul, behind the circumstances that seem often to hide it, would perhaps, with more truth, have said that the man was wise enough to discern the work for which his nature fitted him, and was brave enough to attempt it; and he would yet be strong enough to accomplish it, though he could do so only by following a rough road.

He was engaged now in drawing. All over the table were scattered sheets of paper covered with what looked like designs for some intricate kind of machinery. Near him, in a corner, stood a half-finished machine, and pieces of wood and iron, and

tools of various kinds were heaped beside it on the floor.

The man's face was knotted and puzzled as he bent over his drawing.

"It is very strange," he said, presently, as he drew his hand wearily across his brow; "I seem to understand and almost to see here"—and he tapped his head—"just how my machine ought to be. And yet when I test my plan, by trying to make it work in wood and iron, I find that something—though what I cannot determine—is wanting. Must it be always so? Is mine to be the fate of so many other brain workers? Am I doomed to all but attain my object and then fail? Is this the best that life has to offer me? Then, if such must be my lot, be patient, O my soul! for in the very face of defeat, I will still struggle on." And, as if nerved by his despair, the man once more grasped his pencil, and fastened his keen eyes on his drawing, while, with eyes as intent and a face almost as grave as his, his little daughter waited and watched him.

She was a lovely, but delicate-looking, child about ten years of age. She was poorly clothed: her old shoes were full of holes, and her old, outgrown dress, of faded calico, was worn and patched; but her sunny hair rippled and curled about her head in a lawless but pretty fashion that would have delighted a mother's heart, and her little face

was very fair, though it was also thin and pale. There was nothing precocious or prematurely old and sad about her. She was evidently a bright, winsome child, with a child's capacity for enjoying all the good times that belong to childhood ; but, though she did not look as if she had outgrown childish pleasures, she did look as if few of those pleasures had as yet come to her.

She waited for a time that to an impatient child would have seemed very long ; but still her father bent over his work and appeared forgetful of her very existence. The fire was quite out, and the light of the gray afternoon was fading fast, when she said again in a soft whisper :

“ Papa, papa ! ”

At that second call Mr. Stanmore pushed aside his drawing and looked up.

“ What is it, Joy ? ” he asked.

“ Papa, the fire is out, and I am cold and hungry, ” Joy said, in a plaintive little voice.

Mr. Stanmore looked at her for a second as if he scarcely comprehended her meaning ; then, with a heavy sigh, he arose and went to the stove. A coal-scuttle stood near, but it was empty. Mr. Stanmore felt in his pocket and brought out an old pocket-book ; he examined it thoroughly and ended by shaking it, but not a penny dropped from it. He looked at his little daughter with lips that trembled, even while he tried to smile.

"I am sorry, my dear," he said, "but papa is poorer than usual to-night. Pretty soon—when our ship comes in—we shall have coal enough for ourselves, and plenty to give to others; but this evening we shall have to do without a fire, and if my little girl feels very cold she must go to bed and keep warm there."

"Yes, papa," Joy said, with the pathetic meekness of a child accustomed to the patient endurance of want and discomfort; and again for some minutes she was very quiet, and Mr. Stanmore, with the hurried, uneven step that told of mental unrest, paced up and down his room.

"Hadn't you better go to bed, Joy?" he asked, soon.

Joy drew a long breath. "I'm so hungry, papa," she pleaded; "can't I have something to eat before I go to bed?"

Mr. Stanmore walked to the window and looked out with gloomy eyes. "Isn't there some bread in the cupboard?" he asked in a troubled voice.

Joy jumped from her chair, ran to the cupboard, and inspected every shelf and dish. "Papa," she said, with a pitiful little sob, "there isn't a crumb here."

Mr. Stanmore made a brave attempt to be cheerful. "You are a good deal like old Mother Hubbard to-night, aren't you?" he said, with a smile that ended in a suppressed groan.

Joy did not find the resemblance her father referred to very comforting. “Papa,” she said, “I don’t think I’m as well off as old Mother Hubbard. Don’t you remember, she went to the baker’s to buy some bread. Can we do that, papa?”

Mr. Stanmore did not answer, but he stood with his face pressed against the window as if unable to look at his hungry child. Joy waited and brushed away a few tears.

“Papa,” she said soon, in a voice as tearful as her eyes, “papa, what shall I do? I am so hungry!”

Mr. Stanmore turned at this appeal, and going to his child took her in his arms.

“My poor little darling!” he said, with great tenderness; “you shall not be hungry long if I can help it. I am going out now, and when I come back I will bring you some food. And while I am gone you must go to bed, and try to forget all your troubles in dreamland. Remember, these hard times won’t last long. Some day—very soon now—we shall be rich people. Just now—while I am perfecting my machine—we may have to be a little uncomfortable; but our uncomfortable days will soon be over, I hope; and my little girl will try to be patient while they last, won’t she?”

“Yes, papa.” The words were very sweetly spoken, but there was no hope in them; for the child had listened to such promises so often that

she had lost faith, and no longer expected them to be fulfilled.

"Papa," she said in a moment, "it is a long time since you began that machine: can't you tell yet when it will be finished?"

Mr. Stanmore sighed wearily. "No, Joy," he said, in a sober voice, "I cannot. It may be finished to-night, and I may have to work at it for months. There is a certain little arrangement about it that puzzles me," he continued, more to himself than to his child. "It will come to me like an inspiration, some day, I feel sure it will; and until it comes I must keep on experimenting. I have all but got it now," he added, with renewed courage.

"Oh, dear!" Joy said, with a mournful little sigh that went to her father's heart, "I wish it was all done now. 'But' is such a hard word to get rid of," she whispered, dolefully.

Her father stooped and kissed her. "Yes, I know it, my darling," he said, "but the harder it is to overcome my difficulties, the greater will be my victory when I have finally conquered them. Some day honor and wealth will be mine; and, in the meantime, my little daughter must remember that every time she sheds a tear she weakens my hand, and makes my struggles harder."

Joy winked very hard, and tried to drive back the tears that even then were filling her eyes.

“Papa,” she whispered, as she wound her loving little arms around his neck, “you sha’n’t ever see me cry again. I want to help you, and I won’t complain again, even when I am cold and hungry. I’ll be as brave—as brave as—a lion!” she promised desperately; believing she had now named a height beyond which heroism could not rise.

In spite of his troubles Mr. Stanmore smiled, as he looked at the delicate child in his arms and contrasted her with the fierce animal she had named. “As brave as a good girl will be quite brave enough, I think,” he said, as he placed her in the old rocker.

Joy nodded. “I guess there is no doubt but I can be that,” she said with confidence; and, determined to be true to her promise, she sat up very erect, and watched her father with bright eyes, that though they winked often did not shed a tear, until he took his hat and went out.

Left alone in the cold, cheerless room, poor little Joy neither sobbed nor stirred for some time; but her childish face grew very sober as she puzzled over her troubles and tried to understand them. She was cold and hungry; she had been so many times before in her young life, and she vaguely felt that she might often be so in the future. In his visions—and he had many of them—her father denied her nothing that love and wealth could procure for her; but, in his real experience, he often

found himself unable to provide for her simplest and most pressing necessities.

Joy was too young to understand the circumstances of her life, but she felt them keenly. Her love for her father was boundless; but why he promised so much and performed so little was a mystery she could not comprehend. Child though she was she knew that he toiled incessantly; and yet day by day they grew poorer, and "the ship" so long expected still delayed its arrival. There must be some cause for such a sad state of affairs, but precisely what that cause was Joy could not decide.

She left her chair presently, and going to the half-finished machine examined it carefully, and then she turned to the table, and looked with curious eyes at the drawings scattered over it. What did they mean? she wondered; what great and wonderful design did they represent? She did not know; but she remembered her father's words—she had heard them too often to forget them—"Some day, when my machine is done, we will be rich people, Joy."

"Oh dear!" the poor child sighed, "we have to wait a long time for that 'some day' to come, and the between days are such cold and hungry ones! I'd rather have plenty of bread now, than a great deal of money some day. Oh dear, I think it is pretty hard to be a poor little girl, and have

to wait for a some day that is such a long time coming !”

Joy's bravery seemed to desert her suddenly, and the rebellious tears, she had tried so hard to conquer, would have their way for a few moments. But it was only for a few moments. The child struggled nobly to control herself. “I promised papa I wouldn't cry, and I won't,” she said, with a stamp of her little foot that gave emphasis to her words. “I can do without bread and fire, if I must, but I won't break my word : so there ;” and she nodded defiantly at the machine that seemed to her the cause of all her trouble.

It grew colder and darker in the dreary room, and still the little girl stood by the table studying the mysterious drawings upon which her happiness seemed to depend.

Why couldn't her father finish them, and that curious machine? What was it in them that puzzled him so? she questioned ; and suddenly the thought came, didn't God know, wouldn't he help her father if she should ask him to do so?

It was a new thought to the child, for in her lonely and motherless life there had been no one to teach her the precious truths of the Bible. Her father had taught her to read, but there his instruction, both mental and spiritual, had ceased. Joy had only a very shadowy recollection of her mother's teachings, and it was a long time now

since her childish lips had offered a prayer. But in this hour of trouble the impulse that prompted her to pray seemed like the tender whisper of a comforting friend, and kneeling by the table Joy clasped her little hands above one of the drawings, and reverently whispered :

“Dear God, please help my father, for his work is hard and he cannot finish it alone ; and please too, dear Lord, to remember me, for I am cold and hungry. Give me—” with a sudden recollection of words long unspoken but once lisped daily at her mother’s knee—“give me this day my daily bread ; for thine is all the power, dear Lord. Amen.”

Joy ended her prayer, and rising looked with curious eyes about the room, as if she half expected to find the bread she had asked for already provided. But the cupboard was as bare as ever, and the last red coal in the stove was crumbling slowly to ashes. Nothing was changed in all her poor surroundings, but the little girl felt cheered and comforted.

“Perhaps I had better go to bed now,” she said, wisely ; and when an hour or two later her father returned he found her sleeping. But as he bent above her she moved uneasily, murmured “give me—” and then opened her eyes.

“Joy,” Mr. Stanmore said, “are you still hungry ? Sit up, and see what I have brought.”

Joy was wide awake in an instant. “O papa!” she cried, “have you really got some bread? Oh I am so glad!” And with fingers that trembled with impatience the hungry child seized the small basket her father offered her, and examined its contents with eager eyes.

“Oh!” she cried, joyfully, “here are sandwiches, and pieces of chicken, and a sponge-cake. Papa, this is a supper good enough for a queen.”

“Hunger is an unknown sauce at a queen’s table,” Mr. Stanmore said, with some bitterness; but Joy was too happy to be disturbed by either his voice or words.

“Where did you get this basket, papa?” she asked, in a moment.

“A kind lady gave it to me for you, Joy.”

Joy stopped in the very act of biting her sandwich. “Papa,” she said, in a frightened whisper, “you didn’t have to beg for it, did you?”

“N-n-o,” Mr. Stanmore answered, with some hesitation. “I did a little chore that paid for the basket, Joy. And”—he proceeded to explain in a brighter voice—“the lady has promised me employment that will furnish us bread and coal for several days. And perhaps at the end of that time my work”—and he glanced at his machine—“will be finished.”

Joy was satisfied. “That is good news,” she said, cheerfully. “And, papa, this bread is good,

too. It is sweeter than any candy I have ever tasted."

"Hunger seldom requires much sugar," Mr. Stanmore said, as he watched her with sober eyes. But Joy ran on gayly, "You look as if you didn't believe me, papa; sit down and taste it and then you'll know." Taking her father's hand she drew him down to a seat beside her on the bed, and then with the pride of a little hostess watched him as he ate a sandwich.

"There," the little girl said, presently, in a tone of great satisfaction, "I've eaten sufficient, and I feel refreshed. Papa," and she looked seriously at Mr. Stanmore, "I have learned something to-night."

"What?" Mr. Stanmore asked, with pretended curiosity, "that dry bread is as sweet as honey, when one is half famished?"

"No, not that," Joy said, with a wise shake of her little head, "though maybe that is what you would call a little slipped-in-between lesson, papa; but I've learned something better than that: I've learned that God does hear and answer our prayers. I asked him for something to eat and he has given it to me. And now, papa"—and Joy once more nestled down comfortably in the bed—"I am going to pray always when we are in trouble, and I shouldn't wonder—" and the childish voice was very sweet and serious now—"I shouldn't wonder

if, in a little while, God helps you so that you can say 'all done' instead of that dreadful 'all but.' Don't you believe he will, papa?"

Mr. Stanmore was not ready to answer that simple question, but he stooped and kissed his innocent child. "Good-night," he said fondly, and then he would have turned away; but Joy held him fast.

"You haven't told me, papa. Don't you believe that, if we pray, God will help you?" she repeated.

Mr. Stanmore hesitated; there had been more disappointed than fulfilled hopes in his life, and he oftener thought now of what he must do for himself than of what God could do for him. But as he looked into his child's trustful eyes his own dormant faith revived, and he whispered: "We are in God's hands, my little girl, and I do believe that, in his own good time, he will send the help we need."

CHAPTER II.

DARK HOURS.

“Be thou strong :

Thou art in God, and nothing can go wrong,
Which a fresh life pulse cannot set aright.

That thou dost know the darkness, proves the light.”

—*George MacDonald.*

IT is a bewildering and often times a sad task to trace the ups and downs of fortune in a single life, and when we see noble hopes denied fulfilment, opportunities for happiness and usefulness withheld, and faithful work pronounced a failure, we feel puzzled and dismayed. But “all have not failed who yet have seemed to fail ;” and over all the contradictions, mistakes and trials of life One is watching, who will, if trusted,

“Make the joy the last in every song.”

So Richard Stanmore, in his early manhood, had firmly believed. But the trials and disappointments of life will always have one of two results, as they test us : either our faith will brighten like a diamond that comes from the cutter’s wheel reflecting light from every point, or else our faith will weaken and pass from us like a pearl that ex-

posed to certain acids is quickly dissolved. In Richard Stanmore's case the acid had well-nigh destroyed the pearl.

He had only to count back six years, to reach the period in his life when he was a prosperous and happy man, in a well-known manufacturing town in New England. Then, he was happily married, his home was full of the sunshine that contented hearts create for themselves, and his business, as superintendent of a large woolen mill, gave him a salary ample enough to enable him to support his family in comfort and even luxury.

He had a positive love for machinery, and a quick insight into its intricate combinations; and often, in his leisure moments, he would amuse himself with planning some improvement in the machinery in his mill, and would say, "Some day, when I have time, I will work that plan out." But such dreams were never suffered to conflict with the duties of his position, and the years went by, unmarked by any great changes, until one day the turning point in his life came. It came—as such times are wont to come—in an odd and seemingly trivial way, much as if a straw had drifted across his path. He was sitting one morning in his office at the mill, when two men came in, bringing a small machine.

"Look here, Stanmore," said one of the men, "you have a good eye for machinery, and I wish

you would examine this machine. There is a screw loose somewhere; find it, will you?"

"Very willingly," Mr. Stanmore said, as he left his desk and proceeded to examine the machine.

Meanwhile its owner stood by watching and suggesting, and the friend who had lounged in with him looked idly on.

"What fools you two men are, to waste your time over that machine!" he suddenly exclaimed. "It is of precious little consequence to the world whether it works well or ill. Why don't you use your brains and invent something of some value? a —— machine, for instance, to ——" and he named a machine, at that time unknown, but which to-day can be found in every part of the civilized world—"there would be both fame and money in that for you, and the thanks of millions of tired workers beside."

"It cannot be done," Mr. Stanmore exclaimed.

"It can be, if it hasn't been already," coolly replied his friend. "I should not be surprised to hear that there was one now just dug out of the ruins of Nineveh, or some other forgotten city; and anyway I am sure the day is coming when the world will have that machine, and I know of no reason, Stanmore, why you shouldn't be its inventor."

"Why not yourself?" Mr. Stanmore asked.

"I," laughed the man, "oh, I can make sug-

gestions much easier than I can make machines. I have no fancy for the toil that must come before the reward. But if you will do it, Stanmore, I won't ask any royalty for my suggestion ; the right to say 'I told him to do it' will be honor enough for me."

Mr. Stanmore laughed and answered with apparent carelessness, "Thank you ; I'll think about it."

Nothing more was said about the machine, and its ingenious proposer soon went his way ; but he left his suggestion, like a straw, behind him, and Mr. Stanmore took it up and soon began seriously to consider the feasibility of inventing the machine. Day after day, now, his leisure hours were spent in vain efforts to design it ; his nights were often sleepless, and in his dreams the marvellous instrument that was to work such a revolution in the world was always clicking. Soon his mind became so engrossed with his one project that attention to his business became impossible, and he resigned his situation in the mill.

It was in vain that friends expostulated. Reproaches and ridicule seemed only to make him more determined to persevere ; and as his small supply of money lessened, and the comforts of his home decreased, he would say, with a dreamer's enthusiasm, to his wife, "Never mind ; my machine will be finished soon, and then there will be millions

for us. Millions, and the thanks of the world beside."

Mrs. Stanmore sighed, even while she tried to sympathize with him ; but her health failed soon, and before her husband's resources were quite exhausted she passed into the land where want and disappointment are unknown words.

Left alone, and conscious that among his friends and relatives he was considered a visionary enthusiast, Mr. Stanmore, soon after his wife's death, took his little four-year-old daughter and all that was left him from the wreck of his once happy home and went to the city. There, in his miserable garret room, he worked at his machine ; while his little child, shut in with him and deprived of playmates and all the beautiful home influences that make a child happy, grew like a vine in a dark room ; reaching up eagerly to every sunbeam that touched her, but obliged, for the most part, to droop in the shade.

Such, for six years, had been Richard Stanmore's experience. In those years he had seen many dark days ; but the lowest ebb in his life seemed to be reached that night, when his hungry child cried for the food he was unable to give her. Joy's tears had stabbed him like knives ; and when he seized his hat and left his room it was with the desperation of a drowning man, who will clutch at the smallest strand of rope within his reach.

For a while in the twilight, without aim or hope, he walked the streets. He had no friends in that great city, and he knew of no one to whom he could appeal for help. He had promised Joy that he would bring her food, but he had no power to fulfil his promise. He passed bakeries from whence rich odors stole temptingly forth, and he wandered by beautiful homes through whose windows he could see glad children playing in the firelight. The great city seemed, to his hungry eyes, very rich and prosperous; and as he walked along he remembered a picture he had seen once, and felt a quick thrill of compassion for the outcast who, in that picture, leans upon the gate, and through its windows looks longingly in on the home whose threshold he may never cross again.

As he recalled that picture, Richard Stanmore stopped in his aimless tramp and looked, with a feeling of desperation, about him. He was just in front of a handsome house, and a lady was coming slowly down the steps with a little girl. When they reached the pavement the lady stooped and kissed the child affectionately, and then stood for a few seconds watching her as she ran across the street and up the steps of the opposite house.

Richard Stanmore, with his heart aching for his own hungry child, saw it all, and with one quick, determined step came to the lady's side.

"I beg your pardon, madam," he said, hur-

riedly, "but I have a little girl the size of that one"—and he pointed towards the child who had just shouted across the street, "I'm safe, Auntie"—"I left her at home alone, crying with cold and hunger. For the sake of your own happy little girl will you not give me some food for my starving child?"

The lady looked at him with serious but kind eyes. "I do not understand," she said, slowly. "It seems strange that a man like you should have to"—beg she would have said, but checked herself as she saw the flush that spread over Richard Stanmore's face. "Come in here," she said, as after a moment's silence she turned and opened the basement door. "Now," she inquired when they stood alone in a warm and brightly-lighted basement hall, "who and what are you?"

"I am a poor man who has made a failure of his life," Richard Stanmore said, hopelessly.

"How?" The lady's voice was kind but imperative. "I call no life a failure that has not wasted its God-given powers in dissipation and sin. Have you so wasted yours?"

Richard Stanmore raised his head and met her steady gaze with fearless eyes. "As God is my judge, no," he answered. "But I have spent six of the best years of my life and all of my substance in trying to invent a machine."

"And have not yet succeeded," the lady said,

more as if stating a fact than asking a question. "Well, I am not surprised. The road inventors travel is apt to be paved with pretty rough stones. Will you trust me with your name?" she asked, now in a changed tone and more as if she was speaking to an equal.

"Richard Stanmore."

"And you have a little girl at home who is hungry, you say. Poor child, she shall not be hungry long. But first," the lady added, as a sudden thought occurred to her, "Mr. Stanmore, I have some wood in my cellar that I want split for kindling. Will you split a little of it for me now? You will find it in there," and she pointed to a door. "And the axe is by it. Here is a match and you can light the gas. I will see you again soon."

While his heart blessed her for the kind thoughtfulness that had saved his self-respect, Richard Stanmore went to the cellar and applied himself to his task. He had worked but a short time when his new friend came to him.

"You have split enough for the present, Mr. Stanmore," she said, pleasantly. "But, if your inventions require you to take but little active exercise, perhaps you will be willing to split the rest of this wood for me. Thirty cents an hour is what I usually pay, and if you work an hour or two each day it will furnish you employment for several days, will it not?"

"Yes," Richard Stanmore said, gratefully.

"Then I will expect you to split it. No, you need not thank me," the lady continued, kindly, as they walked towards the door and he tried to stammer his thanks. "Some day—when you are able—lend a helping hand to some one else, and so pass the kindness on. That is the truest and best way to express thanks, I think. Take this to your little daughter," and she handed him a small basket and at the same time dropped a small coin into his hand, "and come at any hour you please to cut the wood. And," she added with kind gravity, "remember, Mr. Stanmore, that our outward circumstances never can make our lives failures. We fail when our characters prove weak and worthless, and only then. If we are doing the work God has appointed for us it matters little in his sight whether, as men judge us, we succeed or fail, so long as we strive nobly."

Richard Stanmore could not speak, but with a grateful heart he accepted the lady's gift and hastened home to his hungry child.

With a slow step and thoughtful face his kind friend went up-stairs and into the warm, bright room, where a noble-looking man sat reading. He looked up with a smile as she came towards him.

"Well, Miriam," he said, "what new kindness have you just been doing?"

"How do you know I have been doing any

kindness, David?" she responded, as she stopped beside his chair and laid her hand affectionately on his hair.

"I see it in your eyes. I haven't studied them for twenty years to no purpose. I understand them pretty well now. Come, tell me the story."

"It is too short a story to be very interesting, David; but a poor man—who was evidently a gentleman—spoke to me an hour ago, when I was bidding Rachel good-night, and asked for food for his hungry child."

"Well?" the gentleman said, questioningly, as the story-teller paused.

"That is all the story, David. Only I let the man split wood for a while, and have just sent him away with a basket of provisions for his child."

"You have a charitable heart, Miriam," her husband said, with a smile. "Who was the man? How do you know that he was not an impostor?"

"Truth has a stamp of its own that cannot be mistaken, David," the lady answered. "The man's face vouched for his honor. I am sure he was sincere. He said his name was Richard Stanmore and that he was an inventor, or at least trying to be an inventor; he has not succeeded yet in perfecting his machine."

"Is he coming again?"

"I think so. I have asked him to split the wood."

“And he is a poor inventor? Well, inventors are like poets—they suffer that the world may be rich. If he is what he claims to be, Miriam, we must look after him. Perhaps he has been sent to us that we may befriend him in his need. Is he”—and the gentleman’s voice changed a little—“I suppose he is—a Christian, Miriam?”

“A Gentile, certainly, David.”

“Ah, you make a distinction between Gentiles and Christians, do you? Probably it is just as well. There certainly are many Gentiles who, judged by their lives, have little claim to the name of Christian. Any way, it matters little to what nation or sect our fellow-man belongs so long as it is in our power to reach out to him a helping hand. He may be a Gentile or a Christian while we are Jews; but that should make no difference, for, as our grand old prophet long ago taught us, we have all one Father, and one God created us.”

“You are a good man, David Rothmer,” his wife said, with shining eyes.

“A son of Abraham is false to his father’s faith if he is not a good man,” David Rothmer answered, gravely. “But bring the Book of the Law, Miriam, and let us have our evening reading.”

CHAPTER III.

FELLOW-MEN.

“O brother man, fold to thine heart thy brother ;
Where pity dwells, the peace of God is there.”

THE next morning Mr. Stanmore went at an early hour to Mrs. Rothmer's, and when he returned, with coal and food enough to last them through the day, Joy's satisfaction was intense.

“I told you so, papa,” she said, with great confidence. “I believe God does hear us when we pray, and I am sure he has given us what I asked for. Papa,”—and the child's face and voice were very thoughtful—“don't you think it would be a good plan for us to pray every day ?”

Mr. Stanmore was just settling himself to his daily task. He heard his little daughter's question with indifference, but, according to his custom, answered her kindly.

“You can pray whenever you like, Joy.”

Joy stood still in the middle of the room, and looked seriously at her father for a moment ; then, with the air of one who had just made an important decision, she went to the shelf and took down a Bible that once had been read daily by her mother, but for years had not been opened.

Slowly, and with great care, she brought it to the table at which her father was working.

"We ought to read this first, oughtn't we?" she asked soberly.

"Read what?" Mr. Stanmore asked, as he glanced up from his drawing. "Oh, that. Why, yes, Joy, you can read it all day if you choose."

Joy dragged the old rocker up to the table, seated herself, and then took the Bible and slowly turned the leaves. They were full of pencil marks.

"We haven't read this book in a great while," she said, "but I am sure somebody used to read it who loved it, and I wonder if it was mamma. Papa, here are some verses with very black marks under them. I'll read them, sha'n't I?" And much to Mr. Stanmore's surprise, Joy read aloud the tender promises in the thirtieth chapter of Isaiah.

"'And therefore will the LORD wait, that he may be gracious unto you, and therefore will he be exalted, that he may have mercy upon you: for the LORD is a God of judgment; blessed are all they that wait for him. For the people shall dwell in Zion at Jerusalem: thou shalt weep no more: he will be very gracious unto thee at the voice of thy cry; when he shall hear it, he will answer thee.'"

Joy stopped reading and looked up at her father.

He was not working, but his eyes were shielded by his hand. "Papa," the little girl asked, earnestly, "does God really say that to us?"

"Yes, Joy."

Joy looked down again on the page before her. "What does 'gracious' mean, papa?" she asked soon.

"Full of love, merciful and compassionate," Mr. Stanmore explained.

"And that is what God will be to us at the voice of our cry," Joy said, thoughtfully. "Papa, what does that mean—'voice of thy cry?'"

"When we offer prayer, I suppose," Mr. Stanmore answered.

"Then," Joy said—translating the beautiful promise into her own simple language, and making her own application—"God will be full of love for us when we pray; and when he hears us he will answer us."

Mr. Stanmore was silent. In a few moments Joy spoke again. "Papa," she said, "we have kept God waiting a long time for our prayers, I think. Hadn't we better kneel now and let him hear them?" And as if there could be but one answer to that question, even as she asked it the child knelt reverently by her chair.

Surprise, and another feeling he would have blushed to confess, seemed for a minute to bind Mr. Stanmore to his chair. He was the son of

Christian parents, and years before, in the brightness of his early manhood, he had publicly acknowledged his faith in Christ. But "the early dew of morning had passed away at noon," and though he did not doubt the truth of his Bible, he no longer heeded its warnings nor rejoiced in its promises.

He had been touched, and many old memories had been awakened the previous evening by his little daughter's words; and now, as he listened to her, he trembled lest by word or act he should do aught to weaken the faith that—even while he called it childish—his conscience told him was more to be desired than any earthly blessing for his innocent child. Slowly, as he saw that she was waiting for him, he arose, and going to Joy knelt beside her.

"Our Father," he began, meaning to repeat the Lord's Prayer. But with those two words there came a sad and humiliating sense of his unworthiness to be owned by that Father as a child, and he could say no more.

Joy waited; but the silence, that was tremulous with music that only the angels could hear, remained unbroken; and presently, with the whisper, "Is it my turn now, papa?" the little girl softly prayed.

"Dear Lord, forgive us that we have kept thee waiting so long to hear the voice of our cry; and

now, that thou dost hear it, please pity us, and help us, for we need thy help very much."

"Amen," the father said, reverently, as the simple prayer ended.

From that morning Mr. Stanmore dated the beginning of a new life. Not all at once, but surely, if slowly, he grew from that time stronger and gladder in his faith that God was as all-loving as he was almighty, and would leave no trustful heart to plead his promises unheard.

To have made even a beginning in such a life of faith was better than any temporal success that could have come to him, and so by degrees Richard Stanmore learned to believe.

Regularly for several days he went to Mrs. Rothmer's, and each day when he left there he found on the hall table an envelope addressed to him containing the pay for his morning's work; but, a little to his surprise, he never saw Mrs. Rothmer. The unsplit wood grew rapidly less, and one morning when Joy asked him, "How much longer will you work for that lady, papa?" he answered, in a voice that betrayed his regret, "This is my last morning as a wood-splitter, Joy."

"Is it?" Joy's little face reflected for a moment the gravity of her father's. "I wonder," she said, slowly, "I wonder, papa, where our next bread will come from."

"Oh, it will come from—somewhere," Mr.

Stanmore said, in the vague way in which people are apt to speak when they feel troubled or undecided.

"I guess it will," Joy said, with a hopeful little nod of her curly head. "God will be sure to find a 'somewhere' for us, if we pray to him. Can't I go with you this morning, papa?" she coaxed, as Mr. Stanmore was about to start. "It looks so pleasant out-of-doors, and it is so lonely here when you are gone, and I am locked in alone."

Mr. Stanmore sighed as his child's words reminded him how much—that more fortunate children enjoyed—was wanting in her young life. He did not send her to school, for he dreaded to have her associate with the rude and neglected children who played in the streets, and filled the public schools in his neighborhood; and it was his custom when he left his room, and could not take Joy with him, to lock her in. It was the only way in which he could protect her—his one little ewe lamb—from the dangerous influences that surrounded her. Now, as he heard her eager request, he paused in the act of opening the door, and looked at her.

Her thin, old dress was out at the elbows, and her old shoes were out at the toes; but the day was a straggler from the Indian summer, by that lovely season forgotten and left behind. Joy could not suffer from the cold, if she was poorly clad, and so her father said, "Yes, come along, if you wish."

Joy did not linger for any elaborate preparations. She pinned a little, old blanket, that was a relic of her babyhood, over her old dress, perched a funny-looking hat, trimmed with flowers that looked as if they had passed through the war of the roses, above her sunny curls, and then taking her father's hand, with a feeling of great content, she skipped down-stairs and through the busy streets to Mrs. Rothmer's cellar. Once there she seated herself on a large log, and with very approving eyes watched her father as he worked.

"Papa," she asked soon, "do you feel very, very sorry that this is your last morning here?"

Mr. Stanmore did not feel like answering that question, and skilfully evaded it by asking in his turn, "How should you feel, if you were in my place, Joy?"

Joy gave that question serious consideration for a few moments. "I think I should feel sorry," she acknowledged then. "You know, papa, it is very nice, when you are hungry, to feel sure that there is plenty of bread in your cupboard. But I suppose," "she added, brightly, "I suppose if our cupboard does get empty again, God will still keep bread for us in his hands, and give it to us as we need it. I don't see, papa,"—and Joy looked seriously at her father—"why God's children need to worry, when he has promised to take care of them, do you?"

A little rustle in the doorway just then made Mr. Stanmore pause in his work and look round.

"Good-morning, Mrs. Rothmer," he said, as that lady approached him. Joy started up and courtesied in an old-fashioned but pretty way that her mother had taught her when she was a very little girl.

Mrs. Rothmer smiled at the quaint but winning little figure and asked, pleasantly, "Is this the little girl you told me of, Mr. Stanmore?"

"Yes, Mrs. Rothmer," Mr. Stanmore answered, "this is Joy."

"I am glad to see her," Mrs. Rothmer said, with a smile that won Joy's heart at once; "an introduction to joy is something one does not receive every day. I have been from home, or I should have seen you before, Mr. Stanmore," she proceeded to explain. "The wood is split, I see; may I ask if your machine is completed?"

"Not quite," Mr. Stanmore briefly replied.

Mrs. Rothmer looked at him a second and then, with eyes full at once of pity and admiration, she turned and watched Joy. "Have you time to stop a little while this morning, Mr. Stanmore?" she asked, as with an unconscious sigh Mr. Stanmore split the last stick and dropped the axe. "My husband would like to see you, and I will take charge of your little girl until you are ready to take her home. Will you come with me, Joy?"

and Mrs. Rothmer smiled winningly, as she asked the question.

Joy's manner, though shy, was very sweet as she went to Mrs. Rothmer's side and placed her own small hand in the one extended to her.

"Come, then," Mrs. Rothmer said, and still holding Joy's hand she led the way up-stairs, followed by Mr. Stanmore. She stopped on the second floor and opened a door.

"David," she said, "I have brought Mr. Stanmore." And Mr. Rothmer came immediately to the door.

"Come in, Mr. Stanmore," he said. With the quiet, gentlemanly manner, free alike from self-depreciation or conceit, that belonged to him, Richard Stanmore entered the elegant room, that was evidently a library, and took the chair Mr. Rothmer offered him.

"You are an inventor, I understand, Mr. Stanmore," Mr. Rothmer said, with the air of a man who, having a certain point to reach, would aim for it by the most direct route possible.

"I am trying to be one," Richard Stanmore answered.

"Will you tell me what you are trying to invent?"

"Certainly ;" and without hesitation Mr. Stanmore gave the desired information.

Mr. Rothmer considered a moment. "That is

something decidedly new," he said. "You never can be accused of infringing on any one's patent if you succeed in perfecting that machine. But do you believe that you can succeed?"

"As firmly as I believe that twice two are four."

"Ah! you are positive. That old multiplication table is one of the very few things whose truth, even in these critical days, no one presumes to question. But, since you are so sure of ultimately succeeding, Mr. Stanmore, what hinders your completing your machine at once?"

"Until within the last few days," Mr. Stanmore calmly explained, "I have been working as children sometimes do in arithmetic—I have been adding when I ought to have subtracted, and have tried to use two wheels where I required only one. I discovered my mistake yesterday. I consider my plan complete now. In a very short time my machine will be ready for inspection, and I shall not fear any test to which it can be subjected."

"You will require considerable money to enable you to patent it, and get it into the market."

"Yes," Mr. Stanmore answered.

"Is there any one who stands ready to furnish that money?"

"I know of no one."

Mr. Rothmer was silent for a few moments, and his grave face showed that he was thinking seriously.

"I do not ask from idle curiosity," he said, soon, "and I have no wish to pry into affairs with which I have no concern ; but, Mr. Stanmore, all that you are willing to tell me of your past life, I shall be glad to hear."

"There is no reason why I should not be willing to tell everything," Richard Stanmore answered a little proudly ; and in a few plain words he told his story.

Mr. Rothmer did not interrupt him, but when he ended he said, quietly :

"There are, of course, business men in that manufacturing town to whom you can refer?"

Without hesitation Mr. Stanmore gave several names, and taking a card and pencil Mr. Rothmer carefully noted them down. Then he said, not as if asking for information but simply affirming a fact, "You are a Christian, Mr. Stanmore."

"I scarcely deserve the name," Mr. Stanmore answered ; "but—yes—I hope I am one."

Mr. Rothmer regarded him curiously. "Does a hope no surer than that afford you much satisfaction?" he asked. Then, as if he had spoken inadvertently, and regretted doing so, he hastened to say : "Excuse me ; I do not wish to entrap you into a theological discussion. You are a Christian, and I"—with a proud emphasis on the word—"am a Jew. A Jew"—and Mr. Rothmer smiled peculiarly—"from Shylock's day to our own, has

always had the unenviable reputation of 'dreaming of money-bags,' and of seeking always, before all higher interests, his own financial advancement. Mr. Stanmore, it is probable that you have shared the world's opinion of us. I shall not quarrel with you, if you have. 'Sufferance is the badge of all our tribe;' and we have borne injustice so long, that justice is something we seldom think of demanding. But now, if I—a Jew—offer you—a Christian—help, tell me, truly, can you trust me as one true man should trust another? can you believe that I have no hidden motive, no secret desire to overreach you, and to secure for myself some benefit that ought to accrue to you?"

Richard Stanmore looked at his questioner and met his searching gaze with eyes that were equally clear and grave.

"Yes," he answered, firmly; "I could so trust you. Though," he added with some hesitation, "I must confess that I do not understand why you should offer to aid one like myself, a poor and an unknown man, who has no claim upon you."

"Save that of a common humanity," David Rothmer interposed. "Do you find," he inquired, gravely, "no laws in your Bible that bind you Christians to such conduct, Mr. Stanmore?"

"In my Bible," Richard Stanmore repeated in a bewildered tone; "why, yes, of course, Mr. Rothmer, we find a great deal in our Bible; but the

laws of the Bible are one thing, and the considerations that influence and govern most men in business life are a very different thing."

"Are they?" David Rothmer asked, significantly. "As a Jew, Mr. Stanmore, it is my firm belief that the laws I find in the Scriptures are meant to regulate and govern my daily life. And among those laws I find it written: 'Thou shalt not harden thine heart, nor shut thine hand from thy poor brother; but thou shalt open thine hand wide unto him, and shalt surely lend him sufficient for his need, *in that* which he wanteth.' I hold myself," Mr. Rothmer added, solemnly, "bound by that law to do all I can for my fellow-men. But understand me; I am no sentimentalist. I make no rash promises. I believe that helping hands should be wise as well as generous, and I never engage blindfolded in any enterprise. I have some knowledge of mechanics, and I would like to examine your machine. If it seems to me to justify your assertions, you shall have my assistance in getting it patented and into the market. I will call on you to-morrow, if that will be convenient for you, and after I have seen the machine we can decide upon our next step. Do you agree to this?"

Mr. Stanmore arose and grasped David Rothmer's hand. "You have strengthened my faith in the God we both call Father," he said, with deep

feeling. "Is there not somewhere in your law a blessing promised to those who stretch out their hand to the poor and needy? I pray—" and the strong man's voice grew husky and broken—"I pray that that blessing may fall on you and yours."

CHAPTER IV.

HARD TO ANSWER.

“And a little child shall lead them.”

WHILE Mr. Rothmer and Richard Stanmore were having their business conversation in the library, Joy and Mrs. Rothmer, in that lady's pleasant sitting-room, were rapidly becoming good friends.

“You may have to wait some time for your father, Joy, and I think you had better take off your hat and shawl,” Mrs. Rothmer said, as she sat down and looked at the child, who stood beside her observing, with curious but modest eyes, the many beautiful things in the room.

Very willingly Joy removed her old hat and unpinned her blanket, but then she stopped. “I think perhaps I had better keep it on,” she said, a little doubtfully.

“But why?” Mrs. Rothmer asked. “It is warm here, and I am sure you do not need it.”

Joy seemed a little troubled. “I think I look better with it on,” she said. “People ought to wear very pretty clothes in such a pretty room, I

think. I don't believe you often have little girls in ragged dresses here. Do you?" she asked, in a timid voice.

"I don't have little girls in any kind of dresses here often, I am sorry to say," Mrs. Rothmer answered. "Take off that blanket, Joy," she insisted kindly; "I will excuse whatever is wrong under it."

Rather reluctantly Joy obeyed, and dropped the shielding blanket. The ragged old dress that Mrs. Rothmer then saw did indeed look out of place among her rich surroundings, but its little wearer possessed a grace and beauty that would have adorned any room, however elegant, and Mrs. Rothmer admired quite as much as she pitied her.

"Come here and sit down," the lady said, as she drew a large easy-chair up close to her own; and with a long-drawn breath of delight Joy dropped into its luxurious depths.

"I didn't know," she said, as she curled herself up in the chair and looked innocently at Mrs. Rothmer, "I didn't know that there was such a beautiful chair in the world. It is just like a bird's nest, isn't it?"

"With a humming-bird nestled in it," Mrs. Rothmer said, smiling at the pretty picture Joy was unconsciously making.

"I don't know, ma'am," Joy said, simply. "I never saw a humming-bird."

“Didn’t you?” Mrs. Rothmer asked, in an amused tone. “Some day you must go to the Museum of Natural History. There are very beautiful ones there. By the way, Joy, do you suppose humming-birds are ever hungry?”

Joy took the question very literally. “Oh, no,” she said, with great seriousness, “God wouldn’t forget to feed them, you know.”

Mrs. Rothmer’s voice was touched with some pitiful thought as she asked now, “How is it with little girls, Joy? are they ever hungry?”

“Sometimes,” Joy admitted; “but,” she instantly added, as if determined that no doubt should cloud her sunny faith, “I don’t believe it hurts them, do you?”

Mrs. Rothmer did not answer, but, a little to the child’s surprise, she arose and left the room. Before Joy could feel lonely, however, she returned with a small tray in her hands.

“No,” she said, as she again sat down beside Joy; “a little hunger doesn’t hurt any one, Joy, but I don’t think this little lunch will hurt you now, and I want you to take it. I sha’n’t think my sandwiches good, if you don’t eat them,” she declared, as she saw that the little girl felt shy about accepting her kindness.

That little sentence had the desired effect, and with a timid but pretty “Thank you, ma’am,” Joy took the little tray and began to eat the tempt-

ing lunch of delicate tongue-sandwiches and delicious frosted jumbles that Mrs. Rothmer so thoughtfully had brought her. Mrs. Rothmer watched her a moment, and noted with pleasure the dainty little way in which Joy arranged her napkin.

"Some children are born with pretty manners, I believe," she said to herself, as she took a large Florida orange from a fruit-basket on the table, and proceeded to pare and quarter it.

"Do you like oranges, Joy?" she asked.

"Yes, ma'am," Joy answered. "But it is a very long time since I have eaten one," she explained, with childish frankness.

"Why?" Mrs. Rothmer asked, more for the sake of hearing the child talk than because she needed to be told the reason.

Joy stopped in the act of breaking a jumble, and looked thoughtfully at Mrs. Rothmer.

"Oranges cost money, you know," she said, simply, "and papa is very poor. It takes all his money to buy the things we must have. Oranges are only things we'd like to have. And so for them we can wait," she added, with a little, unconscious sigh.

"For how long? I wonder," Mrs. Rothmer asked of herself in a low voice, not meant for Joy; but the child's quick ears heard her.

"I don't know, ma'am," she said, in the simple

and innocent way that touched and at the same time pleased Mrs. Rothmer ; “ we have waited a good while, almost as long as I can remember, already. But then ”—she hastened to add—“ you see we didn’t pray, and ask God to help us. Papa was so busy that he forgot to do that, and mamma, you know, went to heaven a long time ago, and I ”—and Joy’s sweet voice grew very humble—“ I—didn’t know.”

With eyes that were very tender in their interest, Mrs. Rothmer watched the child.

“ Do you pray now ? ” she asked.

“ Oh, yes,” Joy said, with animation. “ And—it is strange, isn’t it ? but it is true—just as soon as we began to pray, God began to help us.”

“ And do you think he will continue to help you ? ” Mrs. Rothmer asked now.

“ Of course,” Joy said, without hesitation. “ I’m expecting good things to come fast now. And, do you know ”—she whispered confidentially—“ they are coming so fast that they s’prise me.”

There came a little pause now. Mrs. Rothmer finished preparing her orange and laid it on Joy’s plate.

“ To whom do you pray, Joy ? ” she asked as she did so.

Joy looked at her in surprise. “ Why, to God,” she said in a reverent voice.

“ To no one else—in no other name ? ” Mrs.

Rothmer asked, with some hesitation, as if conscious that her little listener would think her question a strange one.

"No," Joy answered, with increasing surprise ; "there isn't any one else to pray to, is there?"

Mrs. Rothmer did not answer that question, but after a second's pause she asked another.

"Have you a book called the Bible, Joy?"

"Yes, ma'am," Joy said, quickly. "We've always had it, but I've only just begun to read it."

"Which part are you reading?"

"Which part?" Joy repeated. "I don't know, ma'am. Is there more than one part to the Bible?"

Mrs. Rothmer looked surprised in her turn. How careless Christians are about instructing their children, she thought ; and in a moment, without answering Joy's question, she went on with her catechism.

"Are you reading about—Jesus, Joy?" she asked, slowly.

"Jesus?" Joy shook her head. "I guess I haven't come to him yet," she said. "I am reading about Noah now."

From surprise Mrs. Rothmer's face was beginning to express amazement.

"Do you go to church and Sunday-school, Joy?" she questioned next.

"No," Joy explained. "I couldn't go alone,

you know, and when Sunday comes papa is always too tired to take me."

"And yet he is a Christian," Mrs. Rothmer said to herself. "Are there many such indifferent Christians, I wonder? If there are, it is not strange that the Jesus they believe to be the Messiah has not yet conquered the world."

While Mrs. Rothmer was indulging in that soliloquy, Joy was also doing some serious thinking.

"I don't seem to remember about Jesus," she said, in an anxious little voice, "and yet I do believe mamma used to tell me about him. Was he a good man or a bad man? You know"—the little girl hastened to explain as something in Mrs. Rothmer's face rather startled her—"you know the Bible does tell about some bad men. There were giants on the earth in those days, it says. I read about them this morning, and papa said they were wicked men. Was Jesus a giant?"

Mrs. Rothmer's face paled and flushed more than once as she looked at the innocent child before her and pondered her question.

It came home to her with peculiar force. All her religious prejudices, all the teachings that from her cradle she had accepted as true, sprang up to dictate a bitter answer. And yet, as she thought of it, it grew more and more impossible for her to give that answer.

"No," she acknowledged soon, much as if she had just decided the question for herself. "No, I must, and I do, believe that he was a good man."

"I am glad of that," Joy said, in a satisfied voice. "I hope I shall come to him soon. I like to read about good men. I read something very beautiful yesterday," she continued, while she turned her eager little face trustfully towards Mrs. Rothmer, "and I've thought about it a good deal ever since."

"Have you?" Mrs. Rothmer asked, while she secretly hoped for a change of subject. "What was it, Joy?"

"It was in the Bible," Joy answered, "way over in the middle of one of those books that papa said the prophets wrote—though I don't know who the prophets were—and it was about a little child who was to be born some time and who was to have a very beautiful name."

"What was the name, Joy?" Mrs. Rothmer asked, as Joy paused in her confidence and looked at her with serious eyes.

Joy's face brightened at that question. "I was afraid you didn't want to hear," she said, with a child's frankness, "and I am glad if you do, for I think it is a beautiful name."

"Yes, I want to hear," Mrs. Rothmer said, with a little effort to smile. "So tell me the name, Joy."

“He was to be called the Prince of Peace,” Joy said solemnly. “Don’t you like that name? I asked papa about it, and he said he was too busy to explain it to me then, but it was the name of a Saviour who was to be born some day and who was to save his people from their enemies. Have you ever heard of him?”

“Yes, Joy.” The answer was low and sad, as if it came from a heart in which there was at once a great longing and a deep despair.

“And do you think”—and Joy was so eager that she leaned forward and laid her little hand on Mrs. Rothmer’s lap—“do you think he has come yet?”

Mrs. Rothmer hesitated. “Didn’t you ask your father that question?” she said.

“I wanted to ask him, but he was busy and told me he couldn’t talk then. Won’t you please tell me? Do you think he has come?” Joy questioned, in an anxious little voice.

“I—do—not—know!” If Mrs. Rothmer had been asked that question by any man or woman her answer would have been a positive denial. And she was startled and dismayed the next instant as she realized that she had admitted that there was a possibility, at least that an affirmative answer might be the true one. Quickly, as if to save herself from further yielding, she said: “I am afraid, Joy, that he has not come.”

Joy’s earnest little face sobered at these words,

but in a moment it grew bright. "You are not sure, then," she said; "you are only afraid."

Mrs. Rothmer felt like one driven into a corner, but she was determined now to be positive. "Yes," she said, with decision, "I feel sure that he has not come."

"It seems very strange that he should wait so long," Joy said, thoughtfully. "But," she insisted, "you think he will come very soon, don't you?"

Mrs. Rothmer's eyes filled. "The One who knows all things knows how much I hope so," she said, mournfully. "But we have waited a long time, and still there is no sign of his coming, and"—Mrs. Rothmer did not intend to make such a confession, but it escaped her unconsciously—"I have grown discouraged."

"Have you?" Joy asked, in a tone full of sympathy. "I don't believe you need to be discouraged. God doesn't forget what he has promised, you know. The Prince may be almost here now. Perhaps he is only waiting that we may want him more and pray for him to come. You know I found this verse in my Bible one morning: 'He will be very gracious unto thee at the voice of thy cry; when he shall hear it, he will answer thee.'"

Mrs. Rothmer bent forward and gently kissed the child's soft lips. "He who makes the winds

his messengers can easily send a message by a simple child," she thought, "and though we have waited long, and hope has almost died, I do believe God's promises are sure, and in his own good time, I know, he will fulfil them."

The door opened just then and Mr. Rothmer looked in. "Is the little girl ready to go?" he asked. "Her father is waiting for her."

Joy sprang up and hurriedly pinned on her blanket. "You have been very kind to me and I thank you very much," she said, gratefully, to Mrs. Rothmer.

Mrs. Rothmer took the old hat out of the child's hand and placed it with almost tender care on the bright head. "Will you come again soon?" she asked.

"Oh, yes, ma'am; if you'd like to have me," Joy said, with a radiant face. And as she joined her father at the street door her perfect happiness found expression in the eager words: "Papa, I've been in fairyland."

Mr. and Mrs. Rothmer lingered in the open door and watched her as she danced down the steps. Then their eyes met, and with a smile Mr. Rothmer said: "If this is fairyland, I think the fairies had better wave their wands and see if they cannot change old clothes into new ones."

"The fairies are of one mind," Mrs. Rothmer answered, as she closed the door.

CHAPTER V.

FAIRY GIFTS.

"The children's world is full of glad surprises,
Our common things are precious in their sight."
—*Sunday Magazine.*

THE next day, in fulfilment of his promise, Mr. Rothmer called on Richard Stanmore and with intelligent and critical eyes examined his invention.

"I am satisfied," Mr. Rothmer said at the conclusion of his investigation. "Complete this machine as soon as possible, Mr. Stanmore. It will do all you claim. Meet me to-morrow morning at ten o'clock at that place"—and he handed him the card of a well-known patent lawyer—"and we will then conclude our arrangements. I shall count it a privilege to lend you a crutch until you are able to walk alone." And with a smile for Joy, that she thought very pleasant, Mr. Rothmer departed.

Joy stood perfectly still beside her father until the door closed and they were alone, but then she climbed into her father's arms and pressed her cheek lovingly against his.

“Isn’t it wonderful, papa, what good things are happening to us?” she said, in a delighted voice. “Everything we want seems to be coming to us, doesn’t it? and we don’t have to do anything but wish, and—pray,” she whispered softly.

Mr. Stanmore stroked her bright head, and looked at her with eyes almost as happy as her own.

“My little darling,” he said, “I am gladder for you than for myself. If my hopes are realized at last, and I am able to do what I wish for you, my heart will be content. But tell me,” he said soon, in a lighter tone, “have you had all your desires granted, Joy, or is there still something left to wish for?”

Joy glanced down at her old dress. “The good things seem to be coming very fast, papa,” she said, “but I don’t think I have quite everything I want yet.”

“There is still a ‘beyond,’ is there?” Mr. Stanmore asked, in a jesting tone that covered a sober thought. “Well, I am afraid there always will be, my little daughter. But tell me, what would you have now, if to wish and to have could be one and the same thing?”

Joy raised her arm, and looked with sober eyes at her ragged sleeves. “I think that just as soon as you can afford it, papa, I shall wish for a new dress. But there is no hurry,” she added, con-

siderately, "I can wait a little longer just as well as not."

"I hope your waiting days are numbered," Mr. Stanmore said, with a smile. "We will see about the new dress very soon. What color shall it be?"

"Blue," Joy said, with decision. "But, papa," she continued, a little shyly, "I shall want everything nice under it. If the dress is pretty, I want what it covers to be pretty too."

"You are a dainty little maiden," Mr. Stanmore said, in a pleased voice, "and you shall have things just as you wish. You and I will have a grand shopping excursion before many days."

Even as Mr. Stanmore spoke some one knocked loudly on the door, and Joy ran to open it.

"Does Miss Joy Stanmore live here?" asked a messenger boy who held a large, brown paper-box.

"Papa, papa, come here!" Joy called, in great excitement; but the boy pushed by her without ceremony, and placed his burden on the floor.

"It is all right, sir," he said to Mr. Stanmore; "I was ordered to leave it here. There is no charge."

If a sculptor could have seen Joy then, as she stood with wondering eyes and parted lips beside that mysterious box, he would not have asked for a more perfect model for a marble surprise.

“What is it, papa?” the child asked eagerly. “Is it really for me? is it really mine?”

“Suppose you open it and see,” Mr. Stanmore said, as he untied the strong cords that bound the box. And with very glad and very active little hands Joy knelt down and removed the cover.

“O papa, papa!” she cried the next instant; “look here. See, do see!” and the excited child took out a blue dress, prettier than any she had ever dreamed of, and almost hugged it in her delight.

The blue dress was only one of the many pretty things packed in that wonderful box. A pretty, dark-plaid flannel dress came next, and after that a soft, warm cloak. Then came a small box, containing a lovely hat with ribbons and feather to match the blue dress. Shoes that fitted like Cinderella’s glass slippers were next unpacked, and with them came stockings long and fine. And then the remainder of the box was found to be well filled with soft, pretty underclothing, all neatly made, and finished with simple but dainty trimmings, suitable for a little girl; and upon these Joy—true little woman that she was—looked with most approving eyes.

“Go out for a little while, papa, and leave me alone,” the glad child pleaded, when the box was finally unpacked; and with a happier face than he had worn in many months Mr. Stanmore complied.

When he returned, an hour later, a dainty little figure nestled close to his side, a pure little face, all dimpled with smiles, was raised to his, and a glad little voice whispered, "Tell me who I am, papa. Am I your Joy, or am I some one else?"

CHAPTER VI.

UNEXPECTED.

“God’s purposes embrace
All accidents, converting them to good.”

—*Wordsworth.*

DRIP, drip, patter, patter, sang the rain as it dropped from the eaves and beat against the windows the next morning. At the appointed hour Mr. Stanmore went to the lawyer’s office, and Joy was left alone—locked in—with nothing to do until her father’s return.

In spite of yesterday’s gladness, or perhaps because of the reaction that followed it, the little girl felt unusually lonely. The Bible lay on the table, and with a longing for sympathy that she was too young to analyze, Joy went to it for companionship. She was turning the pages rather listlessly, when these words caught her eyes :

“But ye denied the Holy One and the Just.
. . . and killed the Prince of life.”

Joy stopped at that page, and looked long and curiously at those words.

Prince of Peace and Prince of life ! were they different names for the same person ? Intuitively

Joy felt that they were. Then what did those words mean? Had that Prince really come? Had he been killed? and then—more marvellous still—had God, as the next line said, raised him from the dead?

Then, if it was so, why didn't Mrs. Rothmer know it?

Joy puzzled over that mysterious verse a long time, and as soon as her father returned she went to him with her difficulty.

Mr. Stanmore came home in good spirits. He had had a very satisfactory interview with Mr. Rothmer and the lawyer; the proposals made to him were singularly fair and equitable, and Mr. Rothmer himself had suggested and kindly insisted upon advancing him a sum of money sufficient to defray all his necessary expenses until the time when he felt confident his machine would be finished.

Everything looked favorable, and Mr. Stanmore felt very much as if a cloth of gold had just been spread for his feet. Absorbed in his pleasant visions, he felt very little interest in Joy's question, when she asked him, with much earnestness:

"Papa, does Prince of life mean the same as Prince of Peace?"

"The same person, do you mean?" Mr. Stanmore answered, carelessly. "Yes, both of those names belong to him."

“To him? to whom, papa?”

Mr. Stanmore was already busy with a delicate part of his machine.

“I cannot talk with you now, Joy,” he said, with a little impatience. “I am too busy, and I think—since you are developing such a taste for Bible study—you will have to go to Sunday-school.”

“Can I learn all about the Prince there, papa?”

“The Prince”—Mr. Stanmore repeated in a puzzled voice—“Oh, what a curious child you are! Yes, you can acquire a pretty good knowledge of theology at Sunday-school, I imagine. But now, my dear, you must be quiet. I cannot possibly talk and work at the same time.”

Joy felt a little disappointed; but she was innocent of one of childhood's most disagreeable traits—the habit of teasing—and so, though there were a great many questions she wanted to ask, she firmly closed her inquisitive little mouth, and going to her favorite seat in the window she remained for some time as silent as even Mr. Stanmore could desire.

After a while an unusual noise in the hall awakened her curiosity, and going on tiptoe to the door she opened it carefully, and looked out. A middle-aged woman, neatly dressed in black alpaca, and carrying an umbrella and a bandbox, stood in

the middle of the hall, as if waiting or looking for some one.

As Joy opened the door the woman turned, looked at her sharply for a moment and then came to her.

"It ain't possible that you are little Joy Stanmore, is it?" she asked, in a shrill yet not unpleasant voice. "It don't appear to me possible that you can be," she continued, as Joy's surprise kept her silent, "but still I must confess that you do favor the Stanmores wonderfully. My father used to say that the Stanmores, with their brown eyes and their curly heads, were all as much alike as the kernels of corn on the same cob. Well, if you ain't her, perhaps you can tell me where she lives, can you?" and the stranger waited in evident impatience for an answer.

Joy by this time had found her voice. "Yes, ma'am, I'm Joy Stanmore," she said, timidly.

"You really be, be you?" the woman said, with a smile that went far towards atoning for her sharp voice. "Well, I must own this don't appear to me an over-joyful place to find you in; but then, I might as well confess that I never did count much on finding you in Paradise. Where's your pa?"

"He's in here," Joy said, while she stood still in the doorway.

"He ain't, is he? Well, do call him, won't you?"

Joy stepped back into the room and called, softly, "Papa."

"What is it?" Mr. Stanmore asked, indifferently.

"Papa, there is some one at the door," Joy explained in a whisper, "and she wants to see you."

Mr. Stanmore dropped his work and hurried to the door. "Why, Aunt Letty!" he exclaimed, as his eyes met the stranger's, "where did you come from? how do you do? Come in—come in." And taking the bandbox and umbrella from her hand, he kindly drew her into the room.

"I guess you weren't calculating to see me, Richard," Aunt Letty said, with an odd little sound that was neither a laugh nor a sob, but that might have been closely related to either.

"No," Mr. Stanmore acknowledged, "you have taken me by surprise, Aunt Letty, but I am glad to see you. Sit down"—and he drew the old rocker up to the stove for her—"now tell me, how do you do?"

"Oh, I'm well," Aunt Letty answered, as with a sigh expressive of great weariness she dropped into the chair. "As well, that is, as I can be. When you tear an old tree up by its roots it always droops a little at first, I reckon."

Mr. Stanmore regarded her with puzzled eyes. "How did you get here?" he asked. "You didn't drop from a balloon, did you?"

“No ; but I don’t know, if I had, as it would have been a mite more uncomfortable,” Aunt Letty replied, gloomily. “You see, there’s been changes up in our place lately, Richard. Your uncle Jabez died last summer. He didn’t leave no will, an’ he did leave a good many debts. And when we come to settle up his affairs we found we would have to sell the old farm. There’s a little cottage in Spring Valley that belongs to me, and I could have gone there to live. But a house that ain’t got nobody in it that you love is a pretty lonely place. An’ some way my thoughts kept turning to you. We hadn’t heard nothing from you in three years ; but I’d kept your last letter safe, and at last I says to myself, I’ll just put some of my things and myself on board of Pete Tyler’s sloop—he was comin’ down to York to sell produce—an’ I says to myself, says I, I’ll go an’ find Richard Stanmore. So here I be, Richard, and now tell me, can you take me in?”

Mr. Stanmore laid his hand kindly on his aunt’s trembling one. “Yes,” he said, “all that I have I will share with you, Aunt Letty. And now take off your hat, and make yourself comfortable. You shall have a cup of tea soon, and then we’ll talk over matters. Joy,” and he turned to the little girl, who had been watching the new-comer with wondering eyes, “this is your great-aunt Letty Swift ; come and shake hands with her.”

A little shyly Joy approached her new relative. "How do you do, Aunt Letty?" she asked.

Aunt Letty appeared to consider that question unnecessary, and did not answer it; but she took the little girl's hand, and looked closely at her with her keen but kind eyes.

"Richard," she said, "this child looks as if sunshine and fresh milk are things that don't belong in her world. And I must confess," the good woman continued, as she adjusted her spectacles and looked slowly around the poor room, "I must confess, Richard, that things here don't look as if you made your fortune when you pulled up stakes and came to the city."

"No, I haven't made it yet, Aunt Letty," Mr. Stanmore acknowledged, "but I am on the road to fortune now."

"Hum!" Aunt Letty ejaculated, with a shrewd smile, "a great deal depends, Richard, upon which end of that road you are nearest."

Mr. Stanmore did not care to reply to that wise remark. He left the room presently, but soon returned with several small paper packages, and then with Joy's assistance he would have made Aunt Letty a cup of tea, but she coolly took that business into her own hands.

"I guess, after I've kep' house for nigh onto thirty years, I ain't goin' to sit still now and have a man make my tea for me," she said, contemptu-

ously. "You mean well, Richard, but you don't know no more about it than a baby knows how to make bread. Here, just give me the things, an' I'll see to the rest myself." And very willingly Mr. Stanmore obeyed her.

While his aunt was preparing and quietly sipping her tea Mr. Stanmore held a consultation with himself as to ways and means. Aunt Letty was his mother's half-sister. She had been very kind to him when he was a boy, and, though he could not help acknowledging to himself that her unexpected arrival promised to subject him to much inconvenience, he owned at the same time that she had a claim upon him; and he was too true and loyal in his friendships to try to evade or deny it. He was still considering what course to pursue when Aunt Letty set down her cup and turned to him.

"Richard," she said, with calm deliberation, "I've been a thinking."

"So have I," Mr. Stanmore answered. "Perhaps we have been following the same track, Aunt Letty."

"Hum—ye-es—perhaps," Aunt Letty admitted. "But I've come to a conclusion, Richard, which is more than you can say, I know. I suppose, Richard," she continued, soberly, "it ain't no harm for me to say what I think, when I think the truth, an' so I'll just confess to you—without any

beatin' round the bush—that I've made up my mind that you are pretty poor. I ain't no prophet, nor no daughter of one, but I reckon I'm right, ain't I?"

"Yes, Aunt Letty," Mr. Stanmore replied; "just at present my means are very limited."

"Just at present—hum," Aunt Letty said, in a tone that signified much doubt as to any great increase of means in the near future. "Well, then, Richard, since that's the fact—and I knowed it without your owning it—I'll just confess that I think just at present ain't no time for me to come and live with you."

"We will make the best of it," Mr. Stanmore answered, kindly.

"No, we won't, Richard," Aunt Letty said, with much decision; "we will make the best of things that can't be helped, but we won't make the best of anything that can be helped, until we have helped it."

Mr. Stanmore nodded. To argue with his aunt would be like trying to argue with a freshet; his old knowledge of her assured him of that, and so he quietly awaited the unfolding of her plan. She revealed it soon.

"I suppose," she said, slowly, "I suppose I could hire a room somewhere in this house, couldn't I, Richard?"

"Yes, the next room was vacated yesterday."

"Looks just as if it was meant for me, doesn't it?" Aunt Letty said, in a serious voice. "Well, then, I'll take it. I told Pete to have my things sent up here, and I'll just put them in there, and set up housekeeping for myself; and then, Richard, you must go with me to see a doctor who boarded in our place last summer, and tended your uncle Jabez when he was sick."

"What doctor? and what do you want of him?" Mr. Stanmore asked, in surprise.

"What doctor? why, Dr. Randolph," Aunt Letty explained.

"Dr. Randolph; I've heard of him. He is one of the first physicians in town."

"Of course; that is why I am going to him," Aunt Letty replied, coolly. "He will remember me. He knows I have a real knack for nursing the sick; he said so last summer. And now, I am going to see him, and I mean to ask him to recommend me as a nurse. He will do it, I have no fear. There have never yet been too many nurses in this poor, suffering world, and I know Dr. Randolph will be glad to have my help when he's fighting hard to save somebody's life. He is a wise man; he knows, just as well as I do, that good nursing is more than half the battle. So you see, Richard," Aunt Letty concluded, "I see my way clear. I'm here, and I don't want to go back to Spring Valley before next summer; but I

sha'n't be no burden on you, though it will be kinder sociable-like to know you are next door, when I'm to home."

"You are as swift as your name in making plans, Aunt Letty," Mr. Stanmore said, with a happy feeling of admiration for his aunt and relief for himself.

"Hum," Aunt Letty answered. "I don't know what's the use of having a name if you don't live up to it. But then I must confess, Richard, that when I decided to come here, I didn't feel by no means sure that I'd fall into a bed of roses; and so I just looked ahead, and considered what I'd do in case I found you didn't own no property excepting a few castles in the air."

"Well, Aunt Letty," Mr. Stanmore said, with a smile, "your looking ahead proves to have been a very wise action on your part."

"Yes, I knew it was when I did it," Aunt Letty answered. "We ought to pray for good judgment in all things; and I believe when it's given to us that we are bound to use it. And I'm sure, Richard, that we hain't no right to fold our hands, and expect Providence to find cushioned chairs for us, if we won't do the work he has fitted us to do. Them is my sentiments, Richard, and it ain't much use to have fine sentiments, and preach them, if we don't practice them too."

Aunt Letty's plans were soon carried out, and

made realities. Before the next night her room was rented and settled, and she herself engaged as a nurse for one of Dr. Randolph's wealthy patients.

"Providence is never taken by surprise. There are wheels within wheels, but they all run together," she said quaintly but reverently, as she tied on her bonnet and started with her bandbox to answer the doctor's summons. Joy heard her, and looked after her with a sober little face.

"I didn't pray for her," she said to herself, "but she has come, along with all the other happenings, and so I am sure that God sent her, and maybe some day he'll let us know why."

CHAPTER VII.

FEAST DAYS.

“Ithuriel with his spear touched lightly.”
—*Milton.*

THE next day was Thanksgiving, and early in the morning there came a kind invitation from Mrs. Rothmer for Joy to spend the day with her. It seemed to the little girl very wonderful that she should receive such an invitation, and with hands that fairly danced with happiness she dressed herself in the pretty clothes—that she could hardly yet believe to be her own—and started with her father, who left her at Mrs. Rothmer’s door, with the promise that he would call for her in the early evening.

Mrs. Rothmer received the child very kindly, and took her into her dressing-room to remove her wrappings. Without a word Joy laid aside her cloak and hat; then she went to Mrs. Rothmer’s side, and looked up at her, with a very bright and expectant face, as if waiting for some word she wanted to hear.

Mrs. Rothmer looked at her with smiling eyes, but she only said: “Well, Joy; what is it?”

"Somebody has been very kind to me," Joy answered, with a quick glance down on the blue dress.

"I don't wonder," Mrs. Rothmer said, kindly. "But what has somebody done for you, my dear?"

Joy looked a little perplexed. "I thought perhaps you would know about it, and tell me who somebody was," she said, in a shy but winning manner.

"But perhaps that would be like guessing a riddle before I had heard it," Mrs. Rothmer said, with a sweet enjoyment of the child's pretty embarrassment. "You must tell me, first, what somebody has done, Joy, and then, maybe, I shall be able to guess who the somebody is."

Joy came very close to Mrs. Rothmer to tell her secret. "All these beautiful new clothes that I have on came to me in a box four days ago," she said. "I thought perhaps the fairies sent them, and papa said maybe you would know the fairies' names. And now," she whispered timidly, "I want to thank you for them; mayn't I?"

"The fairies are not in the habit of telling their secrets, my little humming-bird," Mrs. Rothmer said, as she stooped and kissed the child's bright face; "but, I guess that in this case papa was right."

Joy was very still for a moment, but then she laid her soft little hand on Mrs. Rothmer's, and

gratefully whispered : "I love the fairies very much."

The hand that for a minute stroked Joy's curls was almost motherly in its tenderness, and Mrs. Rothmer's manner was very gentle as she led Joy into the pleasant sitting-room, and pointed to the easy-chair. "Sit there in your nest," she said, "and tell me everything that has happened since you were here."

It was very easy for Joy to obey that command, and her box and Aunt Letty were both minutely described. "The days have been very full of happenings," the little girl said brightly, as she ended her chronicle. "And oh, Mrs. Rothmer!" and Joy turned her earnest eyes full on her new friend, "I have found out more about the Prince of Peace!"

Mrs. Rothmer started a little. She would have been glad to avoid that subject, but it was a great pleasure to her to hear Joy talk; and so, after a moment's silence, she said: "What have you found, Joy?"

"I found a new place in the Bible," Joy answered, "where it said the Prince had come and wicked men had killed him. It called him Prince of life in that place, but papa said Prince of Peace and Prince of life were different names for the same person. And it surprised me very much," Joy softly added, "to think you didn't know about him."

Mrs. Rothmer did not speak immediately. She regretted now that she had begun the conversation, but some power she felt unable to resist seemed to impel her to continue it; and, in a minute, she said: "I did know about what you have found, Joy. But it is a mistake; that was not the true Prince of Peace."

Joy's innocent eyes rested on Mrs. Rothmer with a grave expression, that made the lady rock nervously in her chair. "But it was in the Bible," the child said, anxiously, "and the Bible always tells the truth. If—" with a quick flash of intelligence—"if that wasn't the true Prince, how will you know when the true Prince does come?"

"The prophecies, that is, the things foretold about him, will all have been fulfilled," Mrs. Rothmer explained.

"Suppose," Joy said, in a thoughtful little voice, "suppose you should find that those foretold things have all been fulfilled about the Prince of life, then, wouldn't you have to believe that he was the true Prince?"

Mrs. Rothmer felt nervous and uncomfortable. "That can never happen!" she said.

"Can't it?" Joy asked, seriously. "There are a great many pages in the Bible between where I found the Prince of Peace promised and the place where it said the Prince of life had come. Have you read all those between places?"

"No," Mrs. Rothmer unwillingly confessed.

"Then," Joy continued, in her innocent, imaginative way, "maybe, if we read those between places, we shall find that the told-before things have all been fulfilled. I shouldn't be surprised if we did find that they have been ; should you?"

Mrs. Rothmer's chair rocked still more hurriedly, and it was a welcome relief to her that, just at that moment, the door opened, and a little girl came in.

"Ah, Rachel!" Mrs. Rothmer said, "I am glad to see you. I have a new friend for you. Joy, this is my little neighbor, Rachel Nathan. Now, you can amuse yourselves together for a little while." And, glad to escape from the new and troublesome thoughts Joy's innocent questions had awakened, Mrs. Rothmer left the room.

It was a new experience for Joy to have a little girl to play with, and she watched her new acquaintance with very curious eyes. Rachel was quite ready to make advances, but she soon discovered that Joy was very unlike her other girl friends.

"Do you go to school?" Rachel asked, as the first step towards intimacy.

"No," Joy answered diffidently.

"Don't go to school? Why, how do you learn anything?"

"I never have learned anything yet," Joy said, with the humility that belonged to ignorance.

Rachel looked at her with contempt and pity.

"Don't you know anything?" she asked.
"Can't you play the piano?"

"I have never seen a piano." Joy confessed, with becoming meekness.

"Well, you have got pretty big eyes, but you have never made much use of them yet," Rachel said, with a satisfied sense of her own superiority. "Come down with me to the parlor, and I'll show you a piano, and, maybe, give you a lesson on it," she added, with a great air of condescension.

The piano proved a good friend; and beside it the little girls spent a very pleasant hour.

Rachel was not a girl with whom Joy was destined ever to become intimate. But, as chance acquaintances often do, she exerted an influence for good that day, and succeeded in impressing Joy with the great importance of going to school, and, as she wisely said, "knowing something if you aren't always going to be a nobody."

Joy treasured up that sensible remark, and determined that she would go to school just as soon as she could consult her father, and obtain his permission to do so.

She felt so impatient to begin her education that the tempting Thanksgiving dinner seemed a matter of very little importance; but after the dinner there came another little conversation, that neither Joy nor her kind friends ever forgot.

"Little girls," Mr. Rothmer asked, as they were

all enjoying their nuts, "do you know why we have a Thanksgiving day?"

"I suppose it is so that everybody can eat turkey," Rachel answered quickly, if not wisely.

"How many turkeys do you suppose the Pilgrim fathers ate on their first Thanksgiving day?" Mr. Rothmer asked, playfully.

"I never met any of the Pilgrims, and so I have never been able to inquire about their dinner," Rachel answered, as she offered to eat a philopena with Mr. Rothmer.

Joy waited, but apparently the philopena had diverted Mr. Rothmer's attention; and, fearful that he would forget to answer his question, she said soon, with some diffidence: "I wish I did know why we have Thanksgiving day, but I am afraid I don't."

"We have it that we may give thanks for our many blessings," Mr. Rothmer said, kindly.

"But," Joy asked in surprise, "can we give thanks enough in one day to last for all the days in a year?"

"No," Mr. Rothmer said, with a smile at her earnestness, "each new day brings new gifts that call for new thanks. But," he added, thoughtfully, "one Thanksgiving day rightly spent might make all the rest of the year a thanks-living. Do you know, my little girls, what that beautiful word 'thanks' means?"

The children looked very thoughtful for a while.

“Doesn’t it mean to think with love of the people who have made us glad?” Joy presently ventured to ask, while she looked gratefully at Mrs. Rothmer.

“You must have a quick insight into the meaning of words, my little girl,” Mr. Rothmer said, in a pleased voice. “You have given a very good definition. That old word ‘thanks’ does come from another old word that means to think or to remember. And so our Thanksgiving day should be to us a day when we remember our mercies and think with love of their Giver. Like that other old feast”—and he looked at his wife—“when our fathers obeyed the law of the Lord our God and rejoiced before him surely for seven days. Have you ever read about that thanksgiving feast in your Bible, Joy?”

“No, sir,” Joy said, with interest. “Does it really tell about Thanksgiving day in the Bible?”

“Joy’s interest in the Bible is as remarkable as her ignorance of it,” Mrs. Rothmer said, in a low voice to her husband.

He smiled and laid his hand kindly on the child’s sunny head. “Yes,” he said, “the Bible tells of a beautiful thanksgiving feast that a people God loved and governed were commanded to keep once a year. Would you like, my little girl, to know how they kept it?”

Joy's eyes kindled with pleasure. "Oh, yes, sir; if you please," she said, eagerly.

"Listen, then," Mr. Rothmer said. "And, first, I want you to try to imagine yourself a little girl in the old, glorious city of Jerusalem, two thousand years ago. And if you can do that, next imagine yourself awakening on a bright, beautiful morning in October and hearing in the streets sounds of music and rejoicing. Then, when you ran to your window, you would see on every house-top and in all the open places, booths made of palm and myrtle branches, in which families and dear friends were to dwell together for seven days. Up in the grand old temple courts there would be solemn services, expressive at once of gratitude for mercies and penitence for sin. As you walked the streets the people you met would wave in their hands branches of citron and palm. There would be smiles on every face, and glad words of thanksgiving would pass from lip to lip, and if you asked the reason for this great joy you would be told that the people were looking back gratefully to a time when, in a long wilderness journey of forty years, God had guided and defended them; and that they were rejoicing in the present because the bountiful fruits of the harvest had all been gathered in. And"—Mr. Rothmer's calm voice trembled a little now—"many might tell you that they were looking hopefully forward to the rest

that would remain for them, when the journey of life was over, or the Shiloh came, unto whom the people were to be all gathered. It was a time for rest, for gladness and thanksgiving—that grand old feast of the Tabernacles. We have but the shadow of it now: we may never enjoy it in its fulness again unless”—and Mr. Rothmer glanced at his wife and spoke solemnly—“Shiloh *should* come.”

“Shiloh?” Joy said, attracted by the twice-repeated name. “Who is that?”

“The Prince of Peace,” Mr. Rothmer said, with solemn tenderness.

Joy looked up at him with a face expressive of wonder and interest.

“Did everything—even to a feast—once promise that that Prince would come?” she asked.

“Yes.”

“And are there any new promises given now-a-days about his coming?”

“No. There have been none for many centuries,” Mr. Rothmer said, gravely. “Our fathers

“‘Asked the skies, but no one spoke;
They asked their hearts, they only broke.’

We can but wait and suffer as they did,” he whispered sadly to himself.

Joy sat very still for some moments and the expression of her young face grew very thoughtful.

“It seems so strange,” she said soon, “that God should give so many promises and then forget them. I think—don’t you?—that something must have happened between his making and stopping these promises that we don’t know. Perhaps”—and the child looked earnestly at Mrs. Rothmer—“perhaps the between places in the Bible that we haven’t read will tell us all about it.”

Once more David Rothmer laid his hand, as if in blessing, on the child’s innocent head. “If they only could,” he said, in a voice broken with emotion. “Oh, if they only could!”

“What are you thinking of, David?” Mrs. Rothmer asked that evening when, long after Joy had gone home, her husband sat silent in his chair, gazing at the fire with an abstracted look on his thoughtful face.

He did not answer his wife at once, and, after waiting a few moments, she spoke again. “David,” she said, “are your thoughts too serious to be revealed? You look as if they were.”

He roused himself a little now and answered, with deep feeling: “At least they are too sad to be trifled with, Miriam. That child, with her innocent questions, has touched a painful chord. Miriam, what if—it cannot be—and yet—what if the Christians are right? What if he, for whose coming we long, has come already?”

“You have said it cannot be,” she answered.

“I know it,” he said, mournfully. “I know it. And yet, oh, Miriam, are any of us positive? Some times—we must confess it—many things seem to verify the Christian faith. And always—always, Miriam—there is that great—perhaps.”

CHAPTER VIII.

BETWEEN PLACES.

“And Jesus called a little child unto him.”

—*Bible.*

EARLY the next Sunday morning Joy opened her eyes, and, springing out of bed, she ran to the window and anxiously examined the clouds and the direction in which the smoke of the nearest chimneys was blowing. Her face brightened as, between the house-roofs, she caught a fair though far-away glimpse of warm, blue sky, and saw that the opposite windows were golden with the morning sunshine.

“It is going to be a beautiful day,” she confided—as she began to dress—to the person with whom she held most of her confidential talks—herself; “and I guess my plan will come to pass.”

Joy had been thinking and planning to some purpose since her meeting with Rachel. As she had read the Bible, and discovered how little of it she could understand, she had become fully convinced of her own ignorance, and now she was firm in her determination not to remain ignorant if by any means she could acquire knowledge. If she

could have books and go to school she felt that her happiness would be complete ; and as the first step in her education, she had decided to go to Sunday-school. She dressed herself with great care ; and when, at nine o'clock, the church-bells began to ring for the morning Sabbath-schools, she went to her father and laid her little hand coaxingly on his arm.

"Papa," she pleaded, "won't you please take me to Sunday-school?"

If she had asked him to take her to a menagerie Mr. Stanmore could not have looked more surprised ; but, after a moment's thought, he arose and took his hat.

"Yes," he said ; "I suppose it is about time your education began, and perhaps it will be wise for us to make Sunday-school the first round in the ladder. Especially," he added, with a peculiar smile, "since your best friends are Jews."

"Jews !" Joy echoed. "What are Jews, papa?"

"Mr. and Mrs. Rothmer are Jews."

"Are they ? Then Jews are very nice people, I think," Joy said, as she tripped along the street beside her father. "But why had I better go to Sunday-school since they are my friends, papa?"

"Oh, for no particular reason," Mr. Stanmore replied, carelessly ; "only, possibly the influence of the one will counteract the influence of the other. Jews do not believe as we do, Joy."

“Don’t they? What do we believe that they don’t?” Joy asked, with a child’s curiosity.

“Oh, various things. Half the Bible, I guess,” Mr. Stanmore answered with indifference.

“Half the Bible!” Joy repeated. “Does that mean the between places that tell about the Prince of Peace, papa?”

“Ye-es; I suppose so.”

“Do you believe in that Prince, papa?”

“Ye-es, you curious child; of course.”

Joy looked up soberly into her father’s face. “It is very strange that you have never told me about him, papa,” she said; and the simple words caused Mr. Stanmore a sharp twinge of self-reproach, though he answered lightly: “Little girls cannot understand theology, Joy. Here we are,” he said, the next moment, as he stopped before a pretty mission chapel. “You can go in here and take your first lesson. Follow these children,” he directed, as several little girls ran in at the open door; “they are all going to Sunday-school.”

With a shy feeling, as if she stood alone in the world, Joy dropped her father’s hand and entered the warm, bright Sunday-school room. No one spoke to her at first, and she waited near the door, too shy to push forward. Soon, however, the superintendent, as he went his rounds, came to her.

“Good-morning, my little girl,” he said; “do you want to join our Sunday-school?”

“Yes, sir; if you please,” Joy whispered, shyly.

The superintendent gave her an encouraging smile, and looked at her a minute, while he debated with himself in what department to place her.

“Have you ever been to Sunday-school?” he asked.

“No, sir, and I don’t know much,” Joy timidly explained. “I am only just beginning to read the Bible, but I want to learn about the Prince of Peace.”

“Do you? come with me then.” And up through the large room the superintendent led her to a class of little girls, all gathered lovingly about a sweet-faced teacher.

“Miss Randolph,” the gentleman said, “here is a little girl who wants to learn about the Prince of Peace. I have brought her to you. I don’t think I can place her in better hands.”

They were at least very gentle hands that welcomed Joy, and drew her into the little circle. And it was a very sweet voice that asked her name; but after doing that, the young teacher went on with the lesson she was explaining. Joy listened, but she did not understand anything that was said, and she was beginning to feel sadly out of place among those well-taught little girls, who seemed to her to know everything, when Miss Randolph finished her lesson and turned to her.

“You want to know about the Prince of Peace,

do you?" she said, gently. "Tell me, first, what you already know about him."

"I only know a very little," Joy said, humbly. "But," she went on, encouraged by Miss Randolph's kind manner, "I found a place in the Bible where it promised that that Prince should come, and then I found another place where it said he had come, and been killed. Do you think that was true?"

"Yes," the young teacher said, in some surprise.

"You are sure then that the Prince has come?" Joy asked, in a modest but very earnest voice.

"Yes, my dear. Why do you ask such questions?"

"Because," Joy explained, "Mr. and Mrs. Rothmer don't think that he has come."

"Ah!" Miss Randolph looked puzzled as well as surprised. "Who are Mr. and Mrs. Rothmer, Joy?"

"They are my best friends," Joy said, in a proud and loving little voice, "and they are very good and kind people. But papa says they don't believe as he does, because they are Jews."

"Ah!" That little exclamation slipped unconsciously from Miss Randolph's lips, and she turned the leaves of her Bible very slowly, and prayed silently for help before she spoke again.

"Have you read much in the Bible, Joy?"

"No, ma'am. I only began it lately."

“Have you ever read the New Testament?”

Joy shook her head. “I don’t know what that is,” she said, meekly.

“It is this part of the Bible,” Miss Randolph said, as she turned to Matthew’s Gospel.

Joy’s face beamed with interest. “Is that the New Testament?” she asked, eagerly. “Why it is the between-part of the Bible too.”

“The between-part of the Bible!” Miss Randolph repeated. “What do you mean, Joy?”

“It is the part of the Bible,” Joy answered, “between the place where the Prince is promised and the place where it says he has come; and it is where I thought perhaps we would find the things foretold about him all fulfilled. Will we find them there?” and Joy looked very anxious as she asked her question.

“Yes, my dear, all of them.”

“Oh,” and Joy’s voice was full of pleasure, “I am so glad; for if we can only find that everything told about him has been fulfilled, Mr. and Mrs. Rothmer will believe on him.”

Miss Randolph felt greatly interested in her new pupil, and at the same time greatly puzzled how to teach her. The child was very ignorant, that was sadly evident, but it was equally evident that she was very thoughtful. The lesson taught her now might influence her whole life; and that thought made Miss Randolph feel that a double

responsibility rested upon her. Into the home of her Jewish friends she might carry some little seed of truth, whose flower and fruitage would be beautiful throughout eternity. A child's simple word is sometimes more powerful than a wise man's argument, and, as she looked at Joy, Miss Randolph felt that those who loved her would find it hard to resist her innocent appeals. In a few moments now the school would close. In those few moments what could Miss Randolph say? where should she begin her instruction? Even as she asked herself that question, her eyes fell on the words that answered it, and she placed her Bible in Joy's hand, bidding her read aloud :

“ ‘God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.’ ”

“ That Son was the Prince of peace, Joy,” Miss Randolph said, as the little girl looked at her with eyes bright with questions. “ God sent him to this world, from heaven, because he loved us and wanted to make us good and happy. We are not always good and happy when we are left to ourselves, are we, Joy ? ”

“ No,” Joy said, softly.

“ But the more we believe in and love Jesus, the better and the happier we will grow. There is no doubt about it, Joy,” Miss Randolph said, in a gentle but very positive voice. “ Jesus did come

to this world, as God promised that he should, and he came because he loved us. He lived here to teach us how we ought to live, and he died for us so that when we die—if we have loved and tried to please him here—we may go to heaven where he is now, and live with him forever. Jesus and the Prince of Peace are the same, Joy. And he has another name—dearer still to us who so often do wrong and need his help—he is our Saviour; your Saviour and mine, Joy. There is no trouble, no wrong, no sin that Jesus will not save us from, in the end, if we will but trust him, and let his will for us be done.”

Ting-a-ling, ling, ling, rang out just then the little bell on the superintendent's desk. Joy's first Sunday-school lesson was over; for the first time she had been taught of Jesus and lovingly led to him.

As she closed her Bible Miss Randolph asked, “Can you come to see me some day this week, Joy, if I tell you where I live?”

“Yes, ma'am,” Joy answered, while her face sparkled with pleasure. “I think, if you want me to come, papa will bring me.”

“I am quite sure I want you,” Miss Randolph said, smilingly. “Take this card, Joy, and ask your father to bring you to my house on Tuesday afternoon.”

That evening, in a warm, beautiful room, where

pictures and books, flowers, bright lights and soft, luxurious furniture told a pleasant story of cultivated tastes, and abundant wealth to gratify them, Miss Randolph sat dreaming in an easy-chair before the fire ; while near her, at the library table, a young man of about twenty sat reading.

“King,” the young lady asked, suddenly, “is your book very interesting?”

“It ought to be, considering that it is the ‘History of the Jewish Church,’ by Dean Stanley.”

“Is it so interesting that you had rather read it than talk to me?”

The young man smiled, closed his book, and came to the fire. “‘Books are the silent companions of my lonely hours,’” he quoted pleasantly. “I never—willingly—allow them to interfere with your claims, Queen Bess. But pray, what subject do you wish to discuss now?”

“One closely connected, perhaps, with your book,” Miss Randolph answered. “King, tell me, do you like the Jews?”

“The Jews? As a people, do you mean? I should question the sincerity of my Christianity if I did not. It does not become one of Christ’s disciples to despise his Master’s nation.”

“I never heard you speak so warmly of them before, King. Then you do—really—like them?”

“Yes,” the young man replied with decision, “I do, emphatically. They are a grand people.

They have been degraded, humiliated and crushed through centuries. They have had a wonderful and a sorrowful history. Wherever they have gone, throughout Christendom, they have been persecuted ; and yet, at the same time, I do firmly believe, that wherever they have gone they have been a blessing. And whenever I hear that name, Jew, used contemptuously, I feel that those who can so use it know very little of history, and still less of the Bible."

"What a champion you are, King!" his sister said, with a smile. "Well, tell me this—do you know a Jewish family by the name of Rothmer?"

"David Rothmer, do you mean? I know of him. He is a noble man. He has great wealth and he is a great giver. I do not believe that any one deserving help ever appealed to him in vain."

"And yet he is not a Christian."

"No. He seems to stand close beside the gate that separates Judaism from Christianity, but he does not pass through it."

"I wonder why he does not," Miss Randolph said, musingly.

Kingman Randolph sighed. "He is only one of a great multitude, Bess. There are thousands of earnest and noble men in his nation who stand where he does. It is not for us to condemn them for their want of faith. Some day, in his own—

which must always be the best—time, I believe the Lord will open their eyes and they will see and believe. And, meanwhile, I can only say, with sorrow for my own unbelief—

“‘Israel, O Israel, how can I condemn thee?
Thy condemnation were my own, I fear.’”

The young man's voice trembled as he spoke, and for a few moments the bright room was very quiet. When Miss Randolph again broke the silence it was to introduce a new subject.

“King,” she said, “I had a new Sunday-school scholar to-day.”

Her brother started and gave himself a slight shake, as if to dismiss some mournful thoughts. “Well,” he answered, “is that anything remarkable?”

“No; not the fact, but the scholar is. I think she is the most interesting child I have ever met. She knows absolutely nothing, and yet she fairly sparkles with thought and intelligence.”

“She is truly a paradox if not a paragon,” Kingman Randolph said, playfully.

“Wait until you see her before you attempt to classify her,” Miss Randolph advised.

“That is much like advising me to wait until I can grasp a star before I decide that it shines,” her brother returned.

“No. You will not be obliged to wait long.

She is to come here next Tuesday afternoon, and, King, I want you to help me."

"To do what? To play with dolls?"

"King, you are positively absurd. Listen, now, and do be serious. This child knows the Rothmers. I think she must be a pet with them, for she called them her best friends. She has had no religious instruction, but she came to Sunday-school because she wanted to learn about the Prince of Peace. And, King, she wants what she calls the between places in the Bible, the proofs that the prophecies were all fulfilled in Christ, because then she thinks that the Rothmers will believe on him."

"Ah!" That little word, as Kingman Randolph uttered it, was very expressive and susceptible of several interpretations.

His sister waited and eyed him curiously. "Your faith is not as strong as hers," she said soon, in a voice that was half a question and half an assertion.

"No," Kingman Randolph answered, sadly. "Those between places—as the child calls them—are all well known to such Jews as David Rothmer, Bess. They have studied them and rejected them, and to every argument that you can advance they will oppose a counter argument."

"It is perhaps fortunate, then, that my little scholar cannot argue," Miss Randolph said, brightly.

“But I shall indulge the hope that some little word of hers may suggest a doubt. And if a doubt, once admitted into the mind, is dangerous to a true faith, why may it not prove ruinous to a false one?”

“It may, if God guides it,” Mr. Randolph said, solemnly. “And we must not forget that Jews and Christians hold one precious faith in common: both believe in the Fatherhood of God. That fact ought to make us strong in both our charity and our hope. Well, Bessie,” he added, in a lighter tone, “I will be at your service Tuesday, to play with your little visitor or to preach to her, as may please her best.”

CHAPTER IX.

THROUGH THE DOOR.

“Better a child in God’s great house
Than the king of all the earth.”

—*George MacDonald.*

THE time from Sunday morning till Tuesday afternoon seemed to Joy, in her childish impatience, almost interminable; but Tuesday morning dawned at last, and then, with great anxiety, Joy studied the weather, which with its gusts of wind, bits of sunshine and flurries of snow was as changeable as a December day could reasonably be expected to display. More than once that morning, as the gray, cheerless clouds darkened the sky, Joy’s eyes filled with tears and her little face looked as sombre as the scene outside. But at noon all the clouds had vanished, the sunshine was warm and the wind just bracing enough to make facing it exhilarating. The afternoon was all that could be desired, and Mr. Stanmore, pleased that his child should have a new friend, cheerfully laid aside his work and accompanied her to Miss Randolph’s door. It was with

a very trembling little hand that Joy rang the bell, and the sight of the white-gloved, colored waiter who answered it and waited gravely for her message embarrassed her so much that it was with great difficulty she succeeded in saying :

“If you please, can I see Miss Randolph?”

“Oh, an’ to be sure,” said a pleasant-faced, white-capped girl, who was passing through the hall. “This is the little girl our young lady is expecting. But Miss Bessie is engaged just now. So show the little girl into the library, Johnson. She is to wait there.”

With a flourish of his gloved hand Johnson beckoned the child to follow him, and leading her to the library door opened it, and with another flourish motioned her to enter.

So much style and ceremony made Joy feel very humble and insignificant, and her little feet longed to turn and run away. She resisted that inclination bravely, however, and stepped over the threshold. With another flourish Johnson closed the door, and with a half-frightened feeling Joy waited near it for some one to come and take charge of her.

She did not have long to wait. The door opened again in a few minutes and Kingman Randolph entered. His first glance at Joy was a surprised one ; then he seemed to understand the state of affairs and said, kindly : “I think you must be the

little girl my sister is expecting this afternoon, aren't you?"

Joy looked up into what she thought a very pleasant face and answered, shyly :

"Ye-es, sir ; I think so. Miss Randolph said I was to come."

"I know it. Miss Randolph is my sister. She will be here soon. She doesn't often keep her visitors waiting, but she has an unexpected caller this afternoon. Now, before she comes, suppose you come to the fire and get warm."

"I don't feel cold," Joy said. Notwithstanding that timid answer, Mr. Randolph took her hand and led her to the cheerful fire that was burning in the grate.

"Don't that hat and cloak come off? I think they had better," Mr. Randolph observed now. And much to Joy's surprise he gently removed her hat and then proposed to help her to unfasten her cloak.

Joy would much rather have kept it on, but Mr. Randolph, though very kind, was quite determined to have his own way ; and so the cloak came off, and then, still more to Joy's surprise, she was lifted, much as if she had been a doll, and gently deposited in a large chair before the fire. And when that was done Mr. Randolph leaned against the mantel, and looked down at her with eyes that would sparkle and laugh, though his

mouth was very grave. "My sister forgot to tell me your name," he said, "but do you suppose I can guess it, if I try?"

Joy had been gazing at the fire as if afraid to look elsewhere; but now she turned a very demure little face towards Mr. Randolph and answered, with some hesitation, "I don't know, sir. Joy isn't a very common name."

Kingman Randolph smiled at the success of his experiment.

"Joy," he said; "is that your name? No, it is not a common name, but I think it a pretty one. Do you know what it means?"

Joy looked a little puzzled. "It means to be glad, doesn't it?" she ventured to say.

"Yes, glad, like a bird, that sings because it has a little spring of music in its heart that it must, in some way, give vent to. The bird makes its own music and sings, you know, just as sweetly in storms as it does in sunshine."

Kingman Randolph hardly expected the child to understand him, but to his surprise and amusement Joy answered, "I don't think we are always glad enough to make our own music. It isn't easy for us to sing in stormy weather."

"I don't believe you know much about stormy weather," Mr. Randolph said, with a smile. "Haven't you just come from one of the countries where they have nothing but sunshine?"

Joy answered him with a bright little color and smile. "I think I have just come to a country where they have pretty warm fires," she said, as she raised her little hands to shield her face from the hot coals.

Mr. Randolph smiled, and wheeled the large chair away from the fire, to a table on which stood a fine megalithoscope.

"Do you like pictures?" he asked, as he selected a view and adjusted it carefully in the instrument.

"Yes, sir, but I've never seen many," Joy said, with a mixture of modesty and truthfulness that Mr. Randolph noticed with pleasure.

"Look through that glass, Joy," he said, when the view was arranged to his satisfaction.

Joy obeyed. "Oh!" she said, with a long-drawn breath of delight, "what place is it?"

"It is a view of Bethlehem, where the shepherds watched, and the angels sang, and the Prince of Peace was born," Mr. Randolph answered, while he watched the child to see what effect his words would have.

They did not have quite the effect he expected; the color deepened in Joy's face, and the eyes, with which for a moment she looked seriously at Mr. Randolph, kindled with a beautiful light. But she uttered no loud exclamations of surprise; she only turned to the glass, and gazed, as if she could not be satisfied, at the wonderful picture.

"Have you read about Bethlehem, Joy?" Mr. Randolph asked.

"Yes, sir; papa found the chapter about it for me Sunday afternoon," Joy answered.

Mr. Randolph waited a few moments longer, and then removed that picture and inserted another. "That is Nazareth, where Jesus lived when he was a little boy, and where he grew up to be a man," he quietly explained.

Joy gazed at the picture for several minutes, and then drew back and looked up at Mr. Randolph.

"Just like other boys?" she asked.

"Just as other boys grow, do you mean? Yes, in every respect but one. Other boys are sometimes very naughty; they do wrong things, and say unkind words. Jesus was always good, and true, and pure. This verse describes him, Joy," and in a low, reverent voice Mr. Randolph repeated: "who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth."

"Sin! is that doing wrong?" Joy asked.

"Yes; and guile, in the mouth, means to be deceitful, false, and untruthful. His pure lips were never defiled in that way."

Joy looked at Mr. Randolph with parted lips, as if about to speak, then hesitated and remained silent.

"What is it, Joy?" he asked, kindly. "Of what are you thinking?"

Joy's thought was told in a low and very sweet voice. "It must have been beautiful to live with him," she said; "he must have kept everybody good."

"Do you think his home must have been more like heaven, than any other spot on earth?" Mr. Randolph asked, gently. "I think so too, Joy. It must always be heaven where Jesus is. But he has the same power to-day that he had so long ago in Nazareth: he will live with us, and keep us good, if we will only ask him to do so."

"How can we ask him?" Joy asked, eagerly; "we cannot see him."

"Would you know how to ask your father to come to you, if you wanted him very much, and he were in one room, and you were in another, out of his sight?"

"Oh, yes," Joy said with confidence. "I should call to him, and if he didn't answer, and come the first time I spoke, I should call again. I know he would come very soon after he heard me, for papa is always very kind."

The smile that illuminated Mr. Randolph's face was bright, but touched with some tender thought, as he answered, gently, "Jesus wants you to feel about his love just as you do about your father's, Joy. He wants you to call to him in prayer, to trust in him, and to wait patiently until he answers you. And he has told us that he is more ready

always to hear and answer us than we are to pray to him. Come and look at this picture, Joy," and Mr. Randolph crossed the room, to where a beautiful copy of Hunt's "Light of the World" was hanging.

"That is Jesus," Mr. Randolph said, gently, as Joy, after looking at it for some seconds, turned wistfully to him. "Jesus knocking at the door of our heart. He waits for us to open that door, Joy. He will not force us to do so—we may open it or keep it closed, just as we please. But long and lovingly he knocks, and patiently he waits, and if we open the door and ask him to enter, his promise—that cannot be broken—is, that he will come in and sup with us."

"Sup?" Joy repeated softly, but in a puzzled tone.

"Don't you know what that means? It means that he will make his home in our heart and will dwell with us, just as one dear friend sometimes comes to dwell with another."

Joy's eyes turned back to the beautiful picture. She asked no more questions, and, as he stood beside her, Mr. Randolph repeated, softly :

" ' Knocking, knocking, ever knocking !
Who is there ?
'Tis a pilgrim, strange and kingly,
Never such was seen before ;—
Ah, sweet soul, for such a wonder
Undo the door.' "

Mr. Randolph paused, and looked at the little girl. Unconscious of his gaze, with her hands clasped and her lips half-parted, she was looking up with earnest and tender eyes at the picture.

“Joy,” Mr. Randolph said, very gently, “will you open that door?”

With a pure and truthful face Joy turned to him.

“It is open,” she said, in her simple, childlike way, “and I think he has come in.”

“May it be to abide with you forever,” Kingman Randolph prayed, as for one instant his hand rested on the child’s young head.

CHAPTER X.

NEW RELATIONS.

“This world is full of beauty,
As other worlds above;
And, if we did our duty,
It might be full of love.”

—*Gerald Massey.*

JOY was still standing entranced before the beautiful picture, when the door opened and Miss Randolph entered, and with a bright smile came to the little girl.

“Joy,” she said, “I have kept you waiting a long time. Are you very tired? Were you beginning to fear I never would come?”

“Bess,” Mr. Randolph said, laughingly, “how can you ask such questions? are you seeking a compliment at my expense?”

Joy did not understand Mr. Randolph, but, as she saw that his sister was waiting for her answer, she said, simply, “No, ma’am, I don’t feel tired. I am very glad to see you, but I didn’t know that I had waited a long time.”

Mr. Randolph bowed, playfully. “Who has the compliment now, Bess?” he asked.

Miss Randolph only smiled. “Joy,” she said,

what has this big brother of mine been doing to amuse you?"

Joy gave Mr. Randolph a shy but very grateful smile. "We have had pictures and talk," she said.

"Pictures and talk! That sounds very pleasant. What kind of pictures and talk, Joy?"

Joy's face changed a little. "I know what that picture means," she whispered, as she pointed to the "Light of the World"—"but, would you mind if I didn't talk about it?"

Miss Randolph glanced at her brother. "Joy is right," he said, quietly; "sometimes the surest way to lose a blessing is to talk too much about it."

"Ah," Miss Randolph said, with quick understanding, "I told you, Sunday, King, that I had found good ground. Have you been sowing seed there?"

"I think it was sown already," he answered, with a smile that, as his sister well knew, covered deep feeling.

Miss Randolph sat down, and drawing Joy to her side amused herself with twining one of her soft curls around her finger.

"What do you think of my paragon now, King?" she asked.

"I indorse your judgment," Mr. Randolph answered. "I have never—to quote one of the good

old poets—met ‘a nature more entirely without frills.’ It is a pity, though, to think how surely ‘the frills’ will come with the years,” he added, playfully.

“Let the years come before you venture to prophesy about them, King, if you would prove a true prophet. Remember pre-judgments are often false judgments,” his sister answered. “Joy”—and she took the little girl’s hand—“suppose you and I leave this wise brother of mine, and go off by ourselves and have a nice little gossip together. Don’t you think that will be pleasant?”

“I don’t know what gossip is,” Joy said, innocently; “is it something sweet?”

“It is usually well flavored with wormwood,” Mr. Randolph said, with a little laugh, but the next instant his face grew grave and he said, seriously, “I beg your pardon.”

“Whose, and for what?” his sister asked, in surprise.

“For daring to speak in the world’s bitter fashion in the presence of a pure, unsullied nature,” he answered. “Bess,” he continued, gravely, “it is a solemn thought, how often, by our idle words, we may grieve the angels of the little ones who in heaven do always behold the face of the Father. If we would be worthy to be the friends of innocent children we have need indeed to pray, ‘Set thou a seal upon my lips.’”

A moisture dimmed Miss Randolph's eyes, and Joy looked wonderingly from the sister to the brother. Mr. Randolph noticed her, and said, in a lighter tone, "I am not going to sermonize much more to-day, but I think Joy's question ought to be answered. Suppose you tell her what gossip means, Bess."

"No," Miss Randolph answered, playfully; "when the definition is trembling on the tip of my wise brother's tongue, I am not going to ransack my mind for it. I have only a confused notion that, in the olden time, the word did mean something dear and pleasant, if not—as Joy so innocently imagined—sweet. Didn't it?"

"Yes," Mr. Randolph replied. "It comes from an old English word, *godsib*, and it means one who is related to us—not by birth as brothers and sisters are related, but—in spirit, by sacred ties that bind us to God as well as to each other. And so to gossip has come to mean talk between friends, and about friends, and it would be always a very sweet thing, if we only would remember that the talkers and the talked about are all the children of one Father, and are all bound together by a chain of love that is fastened to God's throne."

"You are a very good dictionary, King," Miss Bess said, playfully. "But now, please let me ask you one question: when William Tell wanted to hit the apple on his son's head, suppose he had

aimed at the sky ; do you think he would have accomplished his purpose ? ”

“ Does that mean that I have shot above Joy’s head ? ” Mr. Randolph asked, with a smile. “ Suppose we examine her and see if you are right. Joy ”—and he laid his hand kindly on the little girl’s—“ do you think you can tell me now what gossip means ? ”

“ Some one God gives us to love, doesn’t it ? ” Joy answered, modestly.

“ From *God* and *sib*, God and relation,” Mr. Randolph said, with a glance at his sister. “ The child has caught the true meaning, Bess, and they knew it in Shakespeare’s time, when dearest friends called each other gossip. Joy,” and now Mr. Randolph’s eyes danced a little, though his face was very quiet, “ have you a great many friends to love ? ”

“ Only papa, and Mr. and Mrs. Rothmer,” the little girl answered ; “ and Aunt Letty has come now,” she added, with a sudden recollection of Mrs. Swift.

“ That makes only four,” Mr. Randolph said, as he playfully counted them on his fingers. “ Joy, suppose Miss Bess and I should come and ask you to count us among the friends God gives you to love, do you think you could do it ? ”

Joy looked seriously at Miss Bess , and then she turned her demure little face towards Mr. Randolph.

“I’d have to do it, even if you didn’t ask me,” she said, with a child’s truthfulness. “I couldn’t help it.”

Kingman Randolph’s smile was very sweet, as he stooped and just touched one of Joy’s sunny curls with his lips.

“I think I couldn’t help it either, Joy,” he said, gently. “I hope I shall see you very often now that you are to be my sister’s little scholar, and always when I do see you I think I shall claim you as my little godsib. There, now, I will leave you to have your gossip with Miss Bess,” and with a laughing “good-bye,” Mr. Randolph left the room.

“We can spare him for a little while just as well as not, can’t we, Joy?” Miss Randolph said, when she and Joy were alone. “Come and curl up here on this sofa beside me, and tell me all about your little self. All, that is—” the young lady added, with true politeness—“that you think you ought to tell me.”

“I guess I can tell you everything,” Joy said, trustfully; and nestling close to Miss Randolph, in simple language that went to her hearer’s heart, she told her little story.

“You see,” she said, brightly, in conclusion, “it used to be very hard for papa and me, but now—since we have learned to pray, you know—everything seems to be coming right. There are only

two things that trouble me now," and Joy looked at Miss Randolph as she made that confession.

"Two things that even prayer cannot help, Joy?" Miss Randolph asked, tenderly.

The little girl hesitated. "Prayer does help everything, doesn't it?" she said.

"Yes, prayer reaches up and takes hold of the hand that is full of help for us all."

"Then," Joy said, with confidence, "those things will be helped, some day, I am sure. Only it makes one a little tired to wait," she whispered.

The arm that was holding Joy drew her a little closer. "Yes, dear," Miss Randolph said, with a sympathy learned from her own experience, "waiting does make us feel tired sometimes. But we must be patient, my little girl. God's time for helping is always the best time. Now, tell me, my dear, what those two troublesome things are."

"One is about Mr. and Mrs. Rothmer," Joy said, softly; "I do so want them to believe in Jesus, as we do."

Miss Randolph was silent for a few moments. "You must tell that wish to God, and leave it with him, my dear," she said soon. "You do not love your kind friends more than he does. Now what is the other trouble?"

"It is about me," Joy said, humbly. "Miss Randolph, I want to know everything, and I don't know nothing."

"Anything," Miss Randolph corrected, gently. "Well, Joy, that is a sad fact; but how do you think it can be helped?"

"I think if I could go to school, and have books and a teacher, I might help it, don't you?" And Joy looked appealingly at her new friend.

"Yes, without doubt. Well, then, why not go to school?"

"I asked papa to let me go, yesterday," Joy answered, "and he said I must wait until we lived in a better neighborhood, for there wasn't any school near us that he was willing to send me to."

"Ah," Miss Randolph said, in the quick little way that belonged to both her brother and herself, "I understand. Joy," she asked, after a little thought, "what kind of a teacher do you think I would make?"

"I liked you very much last Sunday," Joy said, truthfully.

"Did you?" Miss Randolph asked, with a smile. "I am very glad, but I don't mean for Sunday-school now. Suppose I should give you some books, that I had when I was a little girl, and mark out some lessons for you, and then three times a week have you come here to read and recite to me, wouldn't that be better than no school at all?"

"Oh, it would be the best kind of a school," Joy said, with enthusiasm, "but wouldn't it be

a great deal of trouble for you?" she asked, anxiously.

"That would depend upon my little scholar," Miss Bess said, kindly. "I should want her to study, and try very faithfully to learn; and if she did that, I don't think I should mind the trouble."

Joy started up and in her delight threw herself into Miss Randolph's arms. "Oh," she cried, "I am so happy. Miss Bess, I will try very, very hard, and I'll be—I'll be—the best little gossip you ever had," the excited child promised.

"Come, then," Miss Randolph said, "let us go and find the books." And leaving the library, she led Joy up a broad flight of stairs. At their head they met an elderly gentleman.

"Are you going out, father?" Miss Randolph asked.

"Yes, my dear," the gentleman answered; "I have two or three very sick patients to visit now. Ah"—as his keen eyes fell on Joy—"what little lady is this?"

"Tell him who you are, my dear," Miss Randolph whispered. And as she clung to the young lady's hand Joy answered, obediently:

"I am Joy."

The gentleman smiled. "Joy is always a welcome visitor," he said, kindly. "Is she one of your little friends, Bess?"

"She is my—gossip, father."

Dr. Randolph looked bewildered for a second, but then his face flashed with intelligence.

“Have you stepped back into the seventeenth century?” he asked, playfully. “Well, whatever she is, take care of her while she is with you, Bess. She doesn’t look very strong.” And with another kind smile for Joy, the busy doctor hurried away.

“Now you have seen all my family,” Miss Randolph said, as she and Joy went through the hall to her room. “My father is a doctor, and my brother—King—is a student, and I am their housekeeper. My dear mother”—and the gay voice faltered a little—“is with yours in heaven. And if they are friends there, we must be good friends here for their sake. Now,” Miss Bess continued, as she opened the door of a pleasant room, “this is my bric-a-brac room, Joy. I do a little of everything here, and here we will have our lessons. I will find the books for you, and after the lessons are marked you must have tea with me, and then I suppose it will be time for you to go home.”

CHAPTER XI.

ANXIOUS DAYS.

“The blue of heaven is larger than the cloud.”

—*Mrs. Browning.*

IT was with a happy little heart that Joy tripped homeward with her father that night, and it was with pleasure—so pure and unalloyed that Mr. Stanmore almost envied it—that she opened her precious books the next morning, and began to prepare her lessons.

For the next few days there were no long, lonely and unoccupied hours for Joy. Her lessons were short and easy, but after they were learned her busy little mind continued to dwell upon them: and imagination, with her magical fingers, pieced out of the simple facts many a bewitching story. As she sat in the old rocker, with her books in her lap, Joy was as blissfully content as if the walls of that shabby room had been hung with tapestry, or her broken chair had been a queen's throne. December, “with its sullenest of storms,” was here now, and the early winter days were short, and cold, and gloomy; but in the charmed atmosphere in which both Mr. Stanmore and his little daughter

were at present living, the weather of this matter-of-fact world was of trifling consequence.

Mr. Stanmore was busy and happy, giving the finishing strokes to his machine. As soon as it was completed he was to go to Washington to secure his patent, and then—his imagination, vigorous though it was, seemed to fail him when he tried to picture all that might, could, would, and should be—then. While Joy dreamed over her books, he dreamed over his work, and, in fact, they were both much like children reading fairy tales, during the happy days of that first week in December. Miss Randolph had appointed Monday, Wednesday and Friday for the lesson days, but that first week Joy was not to go until Saturday.

Friday, at dusk, the little girl closed her books with the satisfied consciousness that she had done much more than Miss Randolph had marked out for her to do. Curled up in the old rocker, she sat dreaming happily in the twilight, when with a quick knock—that she did not wait to have answered—Aunt Letty opened the door and walked briskly into the room.

“Well,” she said, with her usual energy, “I’ve come back to look at you long enough to take a daguerreotype. I brought my patient up to where she could walk about her room, and then I says to myself, says I, I’ll just walk over to my room for a while, and see how folks and things are get-

ting along there. Haven't had supper yet, have you?"

"No," Mr. Stanmore answered; "Joy and I live something like the birds, Aunt Letty. We eat when we are hungry; we don't trouble to have regular meals."

"Hum," Aunt Letty answered, with a flash of her bright eyes, "if you would imitate the birds less, and sensible folks a little more, it's my opinion it would be better for Joy, and you too. Human bodies are a good deal like fine dishes: they need careful handling if you want them to last long. But I didn't come in here to preach you a sermon on health, Richard. I've come home to spend the night, and I am going to have supper in my room, and I want you and Joy to come and eat with me. That is," Aunt Letty added, with a little toss of her head, "if you ain't growed so much like the birds that you can't eat nothing but seeds and water."

Joy was in the hall, and waiting by Aunt Letty's door, before that good woman had finished her sentence. And when the door was opened, the child's surprise and pleasure were unbounded. Aunt Letty's room was like Mr. Stanmore's in size, but unlike it in every other respect. It was plainly but comfortably furnished. A bright fire was burning in a stove so highly polished that it might almost have answered for a mirror; a little table in the centre of the room was set out with

some old-fashioned, deep-blue china, and two large rocking-chairs, cushioned with bright flowered chintz, looked very easy and inviting. Mr. Stanmore drew a long breath as he looked about him.

"I haven't seen a room like this since I left home, six years ago, Aunt Letty," he said, with a little sigh, as he dropped into one of the comfortable chairs.

"Of course not," Aunt Letty said, with much assurance. "You left home behind you when you came to the city, Richard; but I brought all that I could of it along with me. You see I didn't come here, as you did, thinking I would walk right into a gold mine and take possession of it; but I came knowing that—just as likely as not—I'd find the ground under my feet pretty well covered with burrs. And so I says to myself, says I, Letty Swift, wherever you go, do you start a home for yourself just as soon as you can, and do you make life just as home-like as you can for other folks. Homes are about the best things folks can have in this world of sin and suffering, Richard, and we are all bound to do all we can to make them for ourselves and for other folks too. Them is my sentiments, Richard, and what I preach I most usually try to practice. Joy," and Aunt Letty turned to the little girl, who was standing by her, "what do you know about cookin'?"

"Cooking!" Mr. Stanmore exclaimed. "That

child knows nothing about cooking, Aunt Letty. We always buy our meals at the baker's, or at some restaurant."

"Miserable way to live!" Aunt Letty said, emphatically. "Joy, can you break eggs?"

"Yes, ma'am," Joy said, while her little fingers fairly ached to be at work.

"Well, there are six eggs in that paper bag on the table," Aunt Letty said. "Now, see if you can break 'em without smashing the shells in with 'em, and then you may take the beater and beat 'em till they are as light as sea-foam."

With great care Joy managed to break the eggs satisfactorily. "What is the beater, Aunt Letty?" she asked now.

Aunt Letty was just broiling two or three delicate slices of ham. She stopped in her work, and looked at Joy with an expression in which pity and disapproval—like the ingredients in some medicines—seemed equally proportioned.

"Don't you know what an egg-beater is?" she exclaimed. "Well, I must confess, child, I do wonder what kind of a woman you will make. There, that is the beater," she said; "now beat the eggs in this way," and Aunt Letty used the beater an instant, in order to give Joy an object-lesson, and then went back to her broiling.

Joy felt as if she were in fairy-land. The sweet broiled ham smelt very delicious, and the beating

of the eggs gave her a delightful sense of importance. And after she had beaten them Joy watched Aunt Letty—as she turned them into a hot pan, tossed them over with much apparent carelessness, and brought them out converted into a beautifully browned omelet—with as much interest as she could have felt if she had been watching some skillful slight-of-hand performer changing—apparently—the broken shells into whole eggs.

Aunt Letty's supper was delicious, and Mr. Stanmore, at least, did full justice to it. "Ah," he said, as he received his second cup of tea, "this truly is comfort, Aunt Letty. I really didn't know before how much I had missed in these last few years."

"There is a great deal of happiness missed in this world, because those who ought to have it are too blind to find it," Aunt Letty said, wisely. "Joy," she demanded in the next breath, "how long have you had that cold?"

"Cold!" Joy repeated, "why, Aunt Letty, I haven't any cold."

"Well, anyway, you have a cough," Aunt Letty insisted. "You have coughed a good many times this evening, and I don't like to hear you."

"Don't worry about the child, Aunt Letty," Mr. Stanmore said, with the sensitiveness of one who shrinks from having even the possibility of danger to a dear one suggested. "Joy is well

enough. You ought to have seen her studying this week."

"I'd rather have seen her playing like other children," Aunt Letty answered, a little ungraciously ; but Joy prevented further discussion by leaving her seat at the table and going to the fire.

"What is the matter?" Aunt Letty asked.

"Nothing," Joy answered. But in a moment she said, a little unwillingly, "I feel cold."

"Cold, in this warm room," Mr. Stanmore said, lightly.

"I can't—help—it," Joy said, with chattering lips.

"She is in a chill," Aunt Letty said to Mr. Stanmore, as in alarm he turned to her. "I'm not surprised. I knew that cough meant something." All the while she was speaking Aunt Letty was moving swiftly about her room, doing what her good sense and experience deemed advisable. As soon as possible she had Joy in her own warm bed, well wrapped in blankets and doctored with hot drinks.

At first Aunt Letty hoped that the chill would not be followed by serious consequences. But as it subsided, fever came on, and soon the poor child began to moan with pain.

"You must go for the doctor—for Dr. Randolph—tell him I sent you," Aunt Letty said with decision to Mr. Stanmore ; and as he hurried away

she said to herself, "I know well enough what's the matter. I won't take the responsibility of this case, but it is pretty clear to me, now, why I felt so moved to come home to-night, and in fact to come to New York at all. It was a clear leading. Well, I'm glad the patient I left is comfortable, for I guess there is a case here that will want all my care now."

As usually happened Aunt Letty proved correct in her guess. When, after an hour's absence, Mr. Stanmore returned with Dr. Randolph, Joy already was very ill.

"She has pneumonia," the doctor said, as his experienced eyes fell on the child. And, as he recognized Aunt Letty, he said, "I am glad to see you, Mrs. Swift. You are needed here."

Aunt Letty already had prepared a flaxseed poultice. "So I calculated," she said, as she brought it to the doctor; "and I always mean to be where I'm needed. I don't know what else I'm in the world for, if it isn't to do work that needs to be done."

Dr. Randolph did not answer. His kind and skilful hands were already busy with Joy, and for a little while few words were spoken in the pleasant room that so suddenly had changed its aspect. But when all was done that could be for the present, and Joy was placed comfortably on her pillow, he asked: "Isn't this the little girl I

saw with my daughter, Miss Randolph, Tuesday?"

Joy's eyes, already unnaturally bright with fever, looked wistfully at him. "Yes, I'm Joy," she said, plaintively. "Can't I go to Miss Randolph to-morrow?"

"To-morrow?" The doctor smiled. "We'll see, when to-morrow comes, my little girl. Don't talk now; shut your eyes and try to sleep."

Joy obeyed, but a big tear rolled slowly down her cheek, and Dr. Randolph's face, trained though it was to conceal rather than to express his feelings, looked grave as he turned away.

"She has a high fever," he said to Mr. Stanmore and Aunt Letty as they followed him to the door, "but it has only just seized her; we have begun to fight it at once, and in these acute diseases time is everything. Keep her warm and quiet, Mrs. Swift, and give the milk and medicine regularly. I'll call to-morrow morning, and I hope I shall find her doing well."

Late that evening as Dr. Randolph sat resting in his easy-chair before the open fire, with his slippered feet on the fender, he asked suddenly, "Bess, how long have you known the little girl I saw here Tuesday?"

"Only since Sunday," Miss Randolph answered, "but I feel as if I had always known her. You do not know how much she interests me."

"Ah," Dr. Randolph ejaculated, and then he clasped his hands above his head and looked thoughtfully into the fire.

"Didn't you think her a lovely child, father?" Miss Randolph asked soon.

"Yes," Dr. Randolph answered, without changing his position.

"I think she is a very fascinating little creature," Miss Randolph said, in the gentle yet enthusiastic manner that was peculiarly her own. "I felt like taking her in my arms the first moment I saw her, and here is King—" and she nodded laughingly to her brother who was resting on the sofa—"usually he pays about as much attention to little girls, or girls of any size in fact, as he does to the dolls in a toy-shop; but he has to acknowledge that Joy—like her name—is something one rarely meets in this world. By the way the little fairy is coming here for lessons to-morrow."

"No," Dr. Randolph said, quietly, "I don't think she will, Bess."

Miss Randolph looked surprised. "You don't object to her coming, do you, father?" she asked doubtfully. "I promised to give the child lessons three times a week. I never supposed you would disapprove of my doing so."

"Nor do I," Dr. Randolph replied; "but, my dear, I am almost sorry that you are so interested in that little girl. I am afraid your interest will

cause you pain, for I have just seen her and she is very ill."

"Ill!" Miss Randolph and her brother exclaimed together.

"Yes, it is a sudden and an acute attack of pneumonia. It may not prove serious, but, unfortunately, she is not a strong child. However, we must hope for the best," the doctor continued encouragingly, as he saw his daughter's pained face. "She has a good nurse—that Mrs. Swift we saw last summer in the country; and to-morrow morning, Bess, instead of giving her lessons, you may make her some good beef-tea."

"Can I go to see her?" Miss Randolph asked, anxiously.

"Yes; only remember you must go with a bright face, and not manifest any concern. Tears in a sick-room are as much out of place as jokes in a sermon." Having delivered that opinion Dr. Randolph arose and left the room.

Miss Randolph looked sorrowfully at her brother. "I am glad she is in father's hands, but I know what he thinks," she said.

"But we do not know what our Father in heaven thinks," Kingman Randolph answered. "Remember she is in *his* hands, Bess; and so, whatever comes, she is safe."

The next morning Joy was no better, and though when Dr. Randolph came he did not shake

his head—like the doctors in stories usually—nor utter any discouraging words, Aunt Letty drew her own conclusions from his quiet non-committal manner.

“It’s goin’ to be a struggle, Richard,” she said soberly to Mr. Stanmore; “but good nursing goes a long way, and prayer goes further still; so we won’t give up.” And through all the anxious days that followed, Aunt Letty, true to her word, did not give up.

Help was freely offered by the friends who had learned to love the child. Miss Randolph came daily with beef-tea and nourishing broths, and Mrs. Rothmer—as soon as she heard of her little favorite’s illness—came to offer the use of anything that her house contained, and the house itself if Joy could be moved to it. Dr. Randolph came faithfully, doing all that his skill could suggest for the little sufferer; but ten days—that Mr. Stanmore in his distress could have believed three hundred and sixty-five—passed before the dread disease was conquered, and Joy’s anxious watchers dared to whisper to each other “she is better.”

“We will soon have you up and around the house, now, my little girl,” Dr. Randolph said, in a voice that he no longer had to try to make encouraging, and Joy verified his prediction by recovering very rapidly.

One morning, just as the little girl had grown

strong enough to tire of her bed and long to sit up, Mrs. Rothmer came in, with a package that strongly reminded Joy of her wonderful box.

“I think,” Mrs. Rothmer said, as she kissed the little girl, “that there was one thing the fairies forgot to put in their box ; so I have brought it now.” And opening the package, while Joy watched with happy and curious eyes, Mrs. Rothmer took out a pretty, crimson wrapper of some warm, soft material as delightful to feel as to look at.

“Can’t I sit up a little while?” Joy pleaded, as Mrs. Rothmer hung the new wrapper on a chair by her bedside. “I’d rather wear that wrapper than look at it.”

“I would rather have you wear it,” Mrs. Rothmer answered, with a smile ; and with Aunt Letty’s assistance Joy—to her own great content—was soon dressed in the soft wrapper, and then comfortably propped up with pillows in one of Aunt Letty’s chintz-cushioned rockers.

She was still resting there when, some time after Mrs. Rothmer’s departure, there came a gentle knock at the door ; and when Aunt Letty opened it a voice, that Joy instantly recognized, asked, “Is your little patient well enough to see a friend to-day, Mrs. Swift?”

“You may come in and judge for yourself, if you please, sir,” Aunt Letty answered—and, with

his hands as full of packages as if he were an express-man, Kingman Randolph entered the room.

"Ah, my little gossip," he said, kindly, "are you really well enough to sit up? Why, this is better than I expected."

From the pillows, among which she was nestled, Joy looked up at him with a happy though pale little face. "I am getting well fast now," she said, gladly.

"Yes, so I see. You will soon be coming for the lessons Miss Bess was to give you, won't you?"

"I—I—hope so," Joy said, with a little quaver in her voice. "I am very sorry that I have had to miss them."

Kingman Randolph placed his packages on the table, and sitting down beside the child took one of her thin little hands gently in his.

"God sometimes disappoints our plans, Joy," he said, "but it is only that his plans for us may be more perfectly fulfilled. It doesn't matter much if we do miss the lessons we meant to learn, so long as we learn all those God would teach us. Tell me"—he said, more lightly—"do you like flowers?"

"Oh yes, sir," Joy answered, "better than anything except—"

"Except what?" the young man asked, as he took up a funnel-shaped package, wrapped in soft

paper, and slowly unrolled it; "except what, Joy?"

"Friends," Joy said, a little shyly.

Mr. Randolph smiled. "Flowers and friends," he said, playfully; "they do make a pleasant combination, I think myself. Now, shut your eyes for a moment, Joy."

Joy obeyed. "Oh!" she cried, the next second, as full in her face came the delicious fragrance of roses, heliotrope and violets. "Oh, how sweet that is! What is it?" And as in her excitement she opened her eyes, Mr. Randolph placed a straw basket filled with exquisite flowers in her lap.

"It will last a long time, just as it is," he said. "It will only need sprinkling occasionally. Now, Joy, are you good at guessing riddles? What do you suppose those other packages contain? You know this is holyday week, and these are some little gifts for you that Santa Claus left in my care. Now guess what they are."

Joy's face grew rosy with pleasure as she looked at the mysterious packages on the table. There was a square package tied with pink cord, a box that was very suggestive of fruit, and last but not least, to judge from the attention Joy gave it, a basket from which every now and then an odd little sound issued.

"I guess there is something alive in that basket," Joy said, with a bright little smile of expectation.

"You are a wise little woman," Mr. Randolph said, as he loosened the cords that tied down the lid of the basket. "Now, Joy, here is a playmate for you." And removing the flowers from Joy's lap Mr. Randolph deposited in their place a downy gray ball, that in an instant was standing on four feet, and rubbing its head against Joy's hand as if anxious to become acquainted with her.

"It is 'a friar of orders gray,'" Mr. Randolph said. "It won't scratch you, but it will play with you, and will, I hope, teach you to play," he added soberly, as he looked at Joy's delicate and thoughtful little face.

Joy's delight in the kitten though not noisy was very great, and for a little while she was too much interested in watching and stroking it, to care to examine her other gifts. But presently pussy, having satisfied himself that he had fallen into good hands, curled himself up comfortably in Joy's lap for a nap, and then his little mistress could think of other things.

"Now shall we make another guess?" Mr. Randolph asked, as he took up the square package. "What is this, Joy?"

Joy thought a moment. "The kitten is to play with," she said, as she looked gravely at Mr. Randolph, "and the flowers are to smell, and look at, and that—I guess that must be something to read," she said, in a happy little voice.

“Do books come next to friends and flowers in your affections?” Mr. Randolph asked. “Well, Joy, next to Shakespeare’s Bassanio, you are the most successful guesser I have ever known or read of. Now, let us see if your taste and mine are as much alike in books as in some other things,” and with a smile Mr. Randolph placed the square package in Joy’s hands. It was a beautiful set of Dickens’ Little Folks—“Dame Durden,” “Little Nell,” “Little Paul,” and all the pretty family; they were all there, and Joy looked at them with sparkling eyes.

“Oh, Mr. Randolph,” she said, “I am so happy. How can I thank you?”

“By taking some of these grapes,” Mr. Randolph said, as he opened a box of choice fruit.

“I am afraid I ought to go now, my little gossip,” he said, in a moment; “my father would want to scold me if I stayed too long and tired you. But, before I go, Joy, would you like me to read something?”

“Oh, yes, sir! if you please,” Joy answered, eagerly.

Mr. Randolph smiled at her interest, and taking out his pocket Bible he read the beautiful story of the childhood of Jesus, as it is told us in the second chapter of St. Luke’s Gospel.

“That is the way Jesus grew, Joy,” he said, as he closed his Bible; “and it is told us here, I think,

so that even children may have in Jesus a beautiful example and a copy to imitate. See how beautiful his life was, Joy. He sat at the feet of the wise men, in the temple, and learned of them ; he gave loving obedience to his parents ; and as he grew in stature, so did he, at the same time, grow in wisdom, and in favor with God and man. It was a beautiful life, my little girl, and it is the one life I want you to try to imitate and grow like." Leaving that thought—like a seed dropped in good ground—behind him, Mr. Randolph went away.

CHAPTER XII.

IN THE KING'S GARDEN.

“What's midnight's doubt, before the dayspring's faith?”

—*Robert Browning.*

THE next two weeks passed very swiftly and pleasantly for Joy. Dr. Randolph ceased his visits, saying that all his little patient needed now was good nursing. Aunt Letty, who had grown very fond of Joy, took good care to give her that. Scarcely a day passed without bringing either Mrs. Rothmer or Miss Randolph, and often both of them, to see her; and in the atmosphere of loving care that now surrounded her, Joy gained strength rapidly.

One lovely morning, when the air was dry and clear but very mild, Mr. Randolph came again. Joy was already dressed for the day in her bright wrapper, and, with Gray-friar in her lap, she made a pretty picture of contentment as she sat curled up in one of Aunt Letty's chintz-cushioned chairs.

Mr. Randolph smiled as he looked at her. “My little gossip,” he said, “how would you like to exchange this rocker for a carriage?”

"I would like it very much," Joy said, with sparkling eyes, "but the rocker is here and the carriage isn't."

"Are you sure? If Mrs. Swift will wrap you up well, so that you cannot possibly feel cold, we will soon find the carriage. Will you do it, Mrs. Swift?"

Aunt Letty answered by bringing Joy's cloak, and Mr. Randolph stood by and waited until she pronounced the little girl ready. Then he produced a fur-lined circular.

"I borrowed it of Miss Bess," he said, as he wrapped Joy in it. "Now, little Esquimo, I think we may venture to try the polar regions. But how do you suppose you are going to get downstairs?"

"I can walk—I guess," Joy said, a little doubtfully.

"Can you? hadn't you just as soon fly?" And as he spoke Mr. Randolph took the little girl in his arms, and carried her down the stairs, and placed her in the carriage that was waiting at the door.

"Where do you think you are going?" he asked, after they had ridden a short distance.

Joy looked at him with a very happy little face. "I don't know," she said, "but it is very pleasant to be going anywhere."

"What do you say to spending this whole day with Miss Bess and myself?"

“Oh ! am I really going to do that ?” the child said joyfully.

“So Miss Bess has declared. And here we are,” Mr. Randolph said, as the carriage stopped. “Now, once more, my little Esquimo, let us see if it is as easy to get into a house as out of one.”

Two or three hours later, Joy lay resting on the lounge in Miss Randolph's bric-a-brac room. She had enjoyed a delightful morning, and Miss Bess had crowned all her other kindnesses by finding in her book-case a beautifully illustrated copy of the “Pilgrim's Progress,” and giving it to her.

Left alone to rest a while Joy had been looking at the pictures, and she was still studying one when the door opened, and Mr. Randolph came in.

“I thought you were ordered to sleep,” he said, kindly, “and instead of obeying, you look as wide awake as an owl. What have you been doing to banish sleep so effectually ?”

“I've been thinking,” Joy said, soberly.

“I am afraid that is a very foolish thing for you to do. But I see your eyes are full of interrogation points, and those are as fatal to sleep as they are to ignorance. Well, my wise little maiden, suppose you tell me what you have been thinking about.”

Joy answered by handing him her open book. “I have been thinking about that picture,” she said—“those children in the garden.”

Kingman Randolph glanced at the picture, and then read aloud the words it illustrated.

“‘Now in this place the children of the town would go into the King’s gardens, and gather nosegays for the pilgrims, and bring them to them with much affection.’ Do you know what that means, Joy?” he asked.

“No,” Joy said, “but I think it must mean something beautiful, for it makes you think of beautiful things.”

“It is one of the loveliest word pictures in that old allegory, I think,” Miss Randolph—who had come in just in time to hear her brother read—said now. “And yet, King, I am not quite sure what it means,” she acknowledged; “are you?”

“Perhaps it has more than one meaning,” Mr. Randolph answered, “but I always have given it one interpretation which to me is very beautiful. Joy, who is meant by the King?”

“Our Father in heaven,” Joy said, softly.

“Yes. And since this garden, of which old Bunyan draws such a lovely picture, is in this world, I love to think of it as God’s own Word, fragrant with the promises that have been from the beginning, and will be unto the end, like balm and all sweet spiceries to believing hearts.”

“And the children who gathered the nosegays?” Miss Randolph said, in a questioning tone while she gently stroked Joy’s hair.

"The children," Mr. Randolph repeated, in a voice that was touched with some tender thought. "Ah, who can they be, but the humble loving ones, who look up with glad eyes to heaven and say, 'My Father,' and hear, in the silence of their souls, his voice answering, 'My child.' To whom, but to such children, would be granted the glad privilege of taking for themselves the promises of the Bible, or of making them into fragrant 'nosegays' with which to comfort the sorrowful, heal the bruised, and rejoice the loving?"

Miss Randolph took the "Pilgrim's Progress" from Joy, and read :

"Here also grew camphire, with spikenard and saffron, calamus and cinnamon, with all its trees of frankincense, myrrh, and aloes, with all chief spices. With these the pilgrims' chambers were perfumed while they stayed here ; and with these were their bodies anointed, to prepare them to go over the river when the time appointed was come."

"God's promises !" Kingman Randolph said reverently, when the low reading ceased. "What else, save faith in those promises, can make our hearts like perfumed chambers during life ? what else, save that same faith, can make us ready and fit to go over the river, when the time appointed shall come ?"

"Does the river mean when we die ?" Joy asked in a wistful little voice.

"Yes," Mr. Randolph said, gently, "or—better than that—it means when we enter into fulness of life. It is not dreadful to think of crossing that river, my little Joy, when we go with 'the Master who knoweth all the fords.'"

Joy did not speak again immediately, but her little face looked very serious. Suddenly she said: "Mr. Randolph, please tell me, isn't the Master Jesus, the Prince of Peace?"

"Yes, and he is the Good Shepherd who will carry the lambs in his arms," Mr. Randolph said, tenderly, as he looked at the child's pure face.

Joy only heeded that one little monosyllable, Yes. "He goes with those who love him and believe his promises," she said, thoughtfully. "Please, Mr. Randolph"—and her eyes filled with tears—"what will become of those who do not believe in his promises? What will"—and her voice choked as she spoke—"what will Mr. and Mrs. Rothmer do?"

Kingman Randolph's own face grew very grave, but he answered, gently, "The Master knows, Joy."

"But I want to know, too," Joy said, with a sorrowful little cry that touched and pained her hearers.

"We cannot always know our Master's plans, but we can always trust them," Mr. Randolph said. "And there is one other thing we can do,

Joy," he added, soothingly ; " we can be like the children in the King's garden—we can give the knowledge of our Saviour to those who do not know of him."

Joy started up and brushed away her tears.

"Oh !" she cried, " I had almost forgotten—the between places about the Prince of Peace—can't I have them now, Mr. Randolph ? When Mr. and Mrs. Rothmer know of them, I am sure they will believe."

Without a word Kingman Randolph took out the little pocket Bible he always carried, and then produced a pencil and a card.

"Joy," he said now, with a smile that, kind though it was, was yet shadowed with a sorrowful thought the child could not understand, "Joy, there are many between places—as you call them—in the Bible ; there are many beautiful and precious promises, and prophecies that refer to the Prince of Peace. I think Mr. Rothmer must know of them all. But we will write down a few of them on this card, and some time—if you want to be like a child in the King's garden—you can tell your friends of these places, and perhaps they will study them more carefully than they ever yet have done. And I believe"—Mr. Randolph added to himself—"I believe that unprejudiced study will bring conviction."

"Especially," Miss Randolph said, as she watched

Joy's earnest face, "especially, Joy, if while they study, we pray."

Mr. Randolph nodded approvingly as he turned the pages of his Bible.

"Prayer is always the key that unlocks the dungeon doors in Doubting Castle," he said. "And, Bess," he continued, thoughtfully, "I sometimes feel that we, who as Christians are called by the name of our Master, have been very unlike our Master in our treatment of his nation. We have despised and condemned them unsparingly, but how seldom have we prayed for them. And yet our place is not on the judgment-seat. It is the mercy-seat that we are bidden to approach with petitions for others as well as for ourselves."

"I know it," Miss Randolph said, humbly. "But what are the places, King?"

"Mark them as I read them," Mr. Randolph said, as he gave his sister the card and pencil. "The first is Jacob's prophecy, Genesis 49 : 10." And Mr. Randolph read :

"The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come ; and unto him *shall* the gathering of the people *be*."

"That is a grand old prophecy," Miss Randolph said. "If they only would believe it !"

"They do believe it," her brother answered ; "but they do not believe—as we do—that it has

been fulfilled. But we will pass on, Bess, to Isaiah 9 : 6.

“For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given : and the government shall be upon his shoulder : and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.”

“That is my verse,” Joy said, in an eager and glad voice.

Mr. Randolph smiled, as he noticed her deep interest. “Between the patriarch’s promise and the prophet’s prophecy there is an interval of a thousand years,” he said, “and more than seven hundred years more were to pass before the Prince comes ; but in his vision Isaiah already sees the fulfilment of the promise, and with unfaltering faith he joyfully declares, ‘Unto us a child is born,’ and his name SHALL BE The Prince of Peace. But we will pass on, Bess, to Daniel 9 : 25. There the time when the Prince shall come is indicated. Next note Micah 5 : 2-5, where the place of his birth is foretold, and his character is described. ‘This *man* shall be the peace.’ Now note Zechariah 9 : 10, where his mission to this earth is declared : ‘He shall speak peace unto the heathen.’”

Mr. Randolph paused and slowly turned the pages of his little Bible.

“Shall we go on,” he asked soon, “and see how wonderfully those prophecies have been fulfilled ?

It will be at least good for our own faith if we do so ; and first, let us look at Luke 2 : 10, 11, 13, 14. Joy, suppose you read these verses." Mr. Randolph gave his Bible to Joy, who read, with a glad ring in her voice, the words of the angel on that first Christmas eve so long ago.

"That which the patriarch and the prophets foretold is fulfilled at last," Mr. Randolph said, as Joy finished reading. "The Prince is born, as Jacob and Isaiah promised, and born at the time Daniel predicted, and born in Bethlehem of Judea as Micah foretold. Turn now to Matthew 21 : 5, and we see him entering Jerusalem in triumph as Zechariah so long before prophesied that he should. Now let us take John 14 : 27, and read of his dying legacy to this world he came to save. See, it is worthy of the Prince of Peace."

And while his voice trembled with tender feeling, Mr. Randolph read :

"Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you : not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."

"His dying gift to us," Mr. Randolph said, softly, "and yet how slow we are to claim it. No earthly friend can leave us a legacy that we do not hasten to secure possession of. Yet the peace which our Saviour left us, the peace which is always waiting for us, is accepted by very few.

But his mission was to 'speak peace to the heathen;' his farewell blessing is peace; and Paul, when he is closing his second letter to the Thessalonians, craves for them as the richest good:

"'The Lord of peace himself give you peace always by all means.'"

"Verily Paul knew that Shiloh had come. Now take Revelation 7 : 9, and let us see the gathering of the people unto him."

"'After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands.'"

Mr. Randolph closed his Bible.

"'After that they shut up the gates; which when I had seen, I wished myself among them,'" he said, in a low voice. "Do you agree with Bunyan?"

The room was very quiet for a few moments, but then, with his usual bright smile, the young man turned to Joy.

"My little gossip," he said, as he gave her the card on which Miss Randolph had written the references, "put that in your pocket, and when you give it to your friends, may it do for them all that you believe it will. And now," he said—rising as the room grew bright with the sunset gold—"I'm sorry to do so, but I believe it is time to take you home."

CHAPTER XIII.

THE LAST APPEAL.

“There is light to reach, and truth to win.”

—*Edwin Arnold.*

EARLY in the new year Mr. Stanmore, with a glad heart, pronounced his machine finished. Leaving Joy in Aunt Letty's care he went to Washington. He was absent but a short time and when he returned, with his patent secured, he fondly fancied that he had left all his trials and discouragements behind him. But he soon learned that he who tries to upset any old and long-established system, must expect opposition and conflict, if not defeat.

The machine was exhibited in the city, and at once attracted attention. It could do all that its inventor claimed ; that could not be denied. But because of that very fact it met with bitter opposition. “Life is hard enough for those who toil with their hands now,” it was urged ; “there are many who cannot find work enough to keep bread on their tables, and want from their doors ; and how can any good result from the invention of a machine that can do a day's work in an hour ?

Why, you might as well put hand-cuffs on half the workers in the country."

It was in vain that the machine was tested satisfactorily ; in vain did its advocates urge that it would only create a demand for more and better work, and result in giving larger wages to the class of workers for whom it was specially designed. It was soon evident that the prejudice against it would not be conquered easily, and that Mr. Stanmore's road to wealth would wind up-hill for a long time yet.

They were very dark and discouraging days that Mr. Stanmore passed through now, but Mr. Rothmer, with his strong faith in the ultimate success of the machine, cheered and upheld him.

"It is a machine that will be in use in every part of the civilized world before you are an old man," Mr. Rothmer said, prophetically ; "and, Stanmore, if those to whom it is offered first cannot see and embrace their opportunity, you must offer it elsewhere. There is a world beyond the Atlantic. You must carry it to England."

"But, my child !" Mr. Stanmore said, in despair.

"Leave her in my care and in my home," Mr. Rothmer answered, "and she shall want for nothing that I can provide for her."

The offer was a generous one, and at first Mr. Stanmore felt inclined to accept it ; but Aunt Letty, when he mentioned it to her, vetoed it at once.

“If you are going to England,” she said, with decision, “I am going back to Spring Valley. It’s the middle of March now, and summer will be here soon, and if I don’t starve for the want of good food, I shall for the sight of green fields, if I stay here. I am going where I can see the grass grow, and breathe air that is sweet with clover, and not dry with dust. And I think—if you are wise, Richard—you will let me take Joy with me. She needs real country living, and not the make-believe kind she’ll find in a boarding house, if she goes to some fashionable watering place with Mrs. Rothmer. Besides”—Aunt Letty urged, a little tremulously—“I think the child ought to know something of her mother’s and your own old friends. Blood is thicker than water, and I don’t believe in cutting all the ties that bind you to your family and relatives.”

Aunt Letty’s last argument decided the question. Mr. Stanmore was conscious of looking back, with many secret regrets at the estrangement of later days, to his own early life, and to the friends who then had gathered around him. Without further debate he resolved to leave Joy in Aunt Letty’s care and send her to Spring Valley.

The Rothmers, at first, deeply regretted his decision, but Mrs. Rothmer’s health was not very good, and soon after it was arranged that Mr. Stanmore should go to England her physician said

that she needed a change, and Mr. Rothmer decided to take her abroad in May for—as he gravely said—an indefinite time.

During the cold shut-in months of January and February, Joy had not been out much. The lessons Miss Randolph had proposed to give her had been indefinitely postponed, for Dr. Randolph had pronounced the child “not strong enough to study.” And the last of January Miss Randolph herself caught a severe cold, that obstinately refused to yield to ordinary remedies, and in some alarm her father sent her to the South in the care of her brother.

Between the claims of society and her own delicate health Mrs. Rothmer, though her interest in the little girl was undiminished, was not able to see her very often; and there were many days, when Aunt Letty was out nursing and Mr. Stanmore engaged with his machine, when Joy felt very lonely indeed.

Before Mr. Randolph and his sister left for the South they had taken pains to supply their little favorite with books, at once instructive and interesting; and Mrs. Rothmer, when she discovered the child's interest in books of travel, sent her a stereoscope and a large number of well-selected views. Over those views Joy spent many happy hours; they took her out of the world in which she lived, and led her into wonderful regions of

which she never had dreamed ; and by dint of the explanations she managed, at odd times, to secure from her father, and the information she acquired from the books Mr. Randolph had sent her, Joy gained that winter a good deal of general knowledge—for a child—and threatened, Mr. Stanmore playfully said, to become an encyclopedia of questions, if not of information.

So had passed the winter ; now, with the early spring days, came the prospect of changes that made the little girl at once glad and sad. It was delightful to think of going to Spring Valley. The very name charmed the imaginative child, and there was not a verse, descriptive of natural scenery, that she came across in her Bible or other books, that Joy did not at once apply to Spring Valley. She was glad to go there ; but then she could not go without parting from her father ; and at the thought of leaving him the poor child shed many sorrowful tears. It was well for her that she did not have many days in which to anticipate the separation. Mr. Stanmore sailed the twentieth of March, and Joy was taken home by Mrs. Rothmer to remain until April, when Aunt Letty expected to be ready to leave the city.

For a day or two after her father's departure Joy wandered in a sad and spiritless way about Mrs. Rothmer's beautiful house, and manifested little interest in any of her kind friends' attempts

to amuse her. But no healthy child will brood long over any trouble, and soon Joy's sunny nature triumphed over her sadness, and she began to look forward hopefully to the time when her father would return, and to indulge in many beautiful visions of what they would do when once more reunited.

One thing, however, still continued to trouble the little girl. Since her talk with Mr. and Mrs. Rothmer on Thanksgiving night about the Prince of Peace, that subject had never been referred to. Mrs. Rothmer, indeed, had studied to avoid it, and Joy, though she treasured the card Mr. Randolph had given her, had found no opportunity for presenting it. The consciousness that her kind friends had no faith in the Saviour, who was very real and very dear to her, grieved the child sorely, and her firm belief that she only had to show them her cherished proofs to change their views, burdened her tender conscience with a heavy sense of responsibility. So Joy pondered and puzzled, and while she did so the spring advanced, and Aunt Letty completed her arrangements, and came one sunny morning to Mrs. Rothmer with the announcement that the next day in the afternoon she should be ready to leave the city. That day—her last in the city—proved in many respects a very wonderful and interesting day to Joy. It was the beginning of the grand old Passover feast, and in Mr. Roth-

mer's home that feast was observed as faithfully and perfectly as it could be anywhere outside of Jerusalem. Joy listened with interest to the serious talks about it, and watched, with thoughtful eyes, the careful preparations for it. What did they all mean? She asked that question of Mrs. Rothmer, and Mrs. Rothmer sent her to the Old Testament, and told her to read for herself the account of the first Passover.

Joy read; and after reading, only wondered the more.

The putting away of all leaven; the eating of unleavened bread; the sprinkling of the blood, and the slain lamb, that each householder must slay for himself, what did they mean?

Already Joy had learned that in the Bible there were no forms and ceremonies without a meaning and a purpose; and for hours that day she lingered over those solemn paschal types, while her childish imagination puzzled over the deep meaning hidden in them. But the longer she pondered, the deeper the mystery grew; and at last she left the Law, that she could not understand, and turned to the New Testament. Slowly, for a few minutes, she turned the leaves, but she stopped soon. She had found First Corinthians, the fifth chapter, and there, in the seventh verse, with great wonder but greater gladness she read: "Christ our passover is sacrificed for us." Was that then the explanation

of the paschal types over which she had been puzzling? It was only the great meaning that Joy caught. All the precious truths embodied in the details remained as dark as ever; but one thing she saw distinctly: It was to the Lamb of God that the lamb of the passover pointed. And Joy's little heart throbbed with gladness, until the saddening recollection came that Mr. and Mrs. Rothmer would not accept of that interpretation, and could not sympathize in her happiness. The thought sobered the little girl, but it also gave her courage to execute a purpose she had long cherished. That evening, when her bed-time approached, she went to Mr. Rothmer, as he sat silent and abstracted in his chair, and laid her little hand coaxingly on his arm.

He turned as he felt her light touch, and shaking off his gloomy thoughts asked, smilingly, "Well, my little girl, what is it?"

Joy's lips were trembling, but she managed to say, "I am going away to-morrow, Mr. Rothmer."

Mr. Rothmer put his arm around her and drew her closer to his side. "Did you think I had forgotten that?" he asked. "My little Joy, I should be glad if it were not true; glad if you were going to stay with me always."

"Papa couldn't spare me for always," Joy said, simply. "But—please, Mr. Rothmer—I want to tell you something before I go. May I?"

"Is it a secret that the birds and the flowers have been whispering to you?" Mr. Rothmer asked. "Well, whatever it is, let me know it, my dear. I am not sure—though I do think myself so much wiser than you—that I should not be a better and a happier man if I knew all of your secrets."

"This is a Bible secret," Joy whispered. "Mr. Rothmer, please," with a timid little emphasis on that word, "do you know what the passover lamb means?"

Mr. Rothmer started and made a little movement as if he would dismiss the child, or at least silence her. But then he seemed to change his mind, and, with a little sigh, he drew her still closer to him and asked: "What does it mean to you, Joy?"

Joy brought her little face very close to his and, while her soft lips almost touched his cheek, whispered: "It means Jesus to me, the Prince of Peace."

A sigh that was like a low moan of pain escaped from Mr. Rothmer.

"Oh, child!" he said, sadly, "my innocent child, I would give worlds to share your faith if—if it were only true."

"Do you think it isn't true?" Joy asked.

"Yes, I do. I must," Mr. Rothmer spoke firmly, and even sternly, yet with an evident effort.

Joy hesitated. But timid though she was, she was too much in earnest now to be repulsed. "You don't know certainly, do you?" she urged. "There are all the between places—you haven't studied all of them, have you?"

"Child," David Rothmer said, with almost passionate decision, "I went over all that ground years ago. And," he added bitterly, "from my study I gained nothing but doubt."

Joy waited a few moments. Mr. Rothmer's excitement—so unlike his usual grave manner—almost frightened her. But soon she found courage to say pleadingly: "Won't you please go over that ground again, Mr. Rothmer? I want you to do that so much."

"Why do you want me to do so?" Mr. Rothmer asked, very gently.

"Because," Joy whispered, as she twined her little arms around his neck, "I love Jesus, and I want you to love him, for—I—love you."

Mr. Rothmer drew a long, deep breath. "My little girl," he said, tenderly, "I would do almost anything for you. But love and faith cannot be forced. We cannot always make ourselves believe, even where we would be glad to do so."

"God can make us," Joy whispered, softly. And once more she pleaded: "Won't you do it, Mr. Rothmer?"

"Do what, Joy?" Mr. Rothmer asked, as if not

quite ready to either promise or refuse. "Tell me just what you want me to do."

"Study the between places," Joy insisted. "They are here on this card—some of them," she explained, as she took the card from her pocket and laid it in Mr. Rothmer's hand. "You study them, and I'll pray, and God"—she added with her beautiful childlike confidence—"will make it all right."

"May God at least bless you," Mr. Rothmer said, with deep feeling, as he folded the child in his arms and kissed her fondly. "Our faiths are different, but the God of Abraham is the God to whom we both pray. Yes," he continued, solemnly, as he placed the little card in his pocket-book, "I will study these between places, Joy. I will not allow any prejudice to blind my eyes: and if—if—I am convinced that the Christian's faith is true, I—will confess it."

CHAPTER XIV.

BRIGHT HOURS.

“Life is only bright when it proceedeth
Towards a truer, deeper life above.”

—*Adelaide Proctor.*

AUNT LETTY had arranged to leave the city in the afternoon; and the next morning, while Joy, with Mrs. Rothmer's assistance, was packing her trunk the door-bell rang. “Perhaps that is the express-man,” Mrs. Rothmer said; “run down and see, Joy, and if it is, tell him the trunk will be ready in a few moments.”

Joy obeyed; but when half way down the stairs she heard a familiar voice asking: “Is there a little girl here named Joy Stanmore?” and the next moment she was down the stairs and in Miss Randolph's arms.

“Oh, I am so glad, so very glad!” she cried; “I thought I should have to go without seeing you.”

“Did you?” Miss Randolph asked, tenderly; “my dear little Joy, I should have regretted that quite as much as you would. We only returned home yesterday—my brother and I—and my

father told us last evening that you were going away with Mrs. Swift, and so this morning we started out to find you. We went first to Mrs. Swift's room, and she sent us here; and now, if Mrs. Rothmer will spare you, we want to take you with us. We means King and myself,"—Miss Randolph added in explanation—"and he is waiting for us in the carriage. Now run and see if you can go with us."

Joy did not need to have that command repeated. With a glad little face she skipped away to Mrs. Rothmer, and soon returned ready for her drive.

Mr. Randolph greeted her with a bright smile. "My little gossip," he said, "do you know that I am very glad to see you? How do you do?"

Joy gave him a demure little answer, and with a most delightful feeling of contentment took her seat in the carriage.

"How is the Gray-friar?" Mr. Randolph asked.

"Oh, he's well," Joy said promptly. "He's going to Spring Valley, too."

"Is he? I think he is a very fortunate Gray-friar. It is too bad, my little gossip, that we should play such a game of see-saw, and that you should go away just as we come back. But now, in this last day that we can be together, what do you suppose we are going to do?"

Joy looked very wise. "Something pleasant, I guess," she said.

"You are a wise little maiden," Mr. Randolph said, as the carriage stopped and he lifted her out. "Come, we have a very important piece of business to transact here." And taking her by the hand he began to climb up a long flight of stairs, that started from the street and wound up, up, up, until Joy fairly panted for breath. "Something like climbing Jack's beanstalk, isn't it?" Mr. Randolph said, playfully. "Well, travelling skyward always is hard work. But here we are," and as he spoke he led the little girl into a large and finely arranged photographer's gallery.

Joy looked about her with pleased eyes, but her surprise was great when, with the smiling question, "Did you ever have your picture taken, Joy?" Miss Randolph led her into a dressing-room and began to arrange her dress and hair.

"If we must part with you, we must at least have your picture," Miss Randolph said, when at last she had arranged Joy's toilet to her satisfaction and pronounced her ready for the photographer.

Mr. Randolph himself placed her in the position he wanted, and when he was satisfied, he said: "Now, Joy, we will let the camera do its part. It is only a 'trap to catch a sunbeam,'" he added, laughingly.

Joy's first sitting proved a very successful one. "The sunbeam is certainly caught," Miss Ran-

dolph said, in a satisfied voice, as she examined the negative.

"We are both very foolish, Bess," Mr. Randolph said, as they left the gallery, but his smile showed that he was enjoying their morning's excursion as much as his sister. "Now, Joy," he asked, when they were again seated in the carriage, "what do you think comes next on our programme?"

"Saying good-bye," Joy suggested, a little tremulously.

Mr. Randolph glanced at his watch. "Not yet," he said, kindly. "Good-bye is a word that hath been, and must be, but it sha'n't be until the inevitable last moment comes. But, Joy, do you know what friends do after they have said good-bye?"

Joy gave him a wistful little smile. "Do they think of when they'll meet again?" she asked.

"Truly, I hope so," Mr. Randolph said, gayly. "But sometimes, Joy, they do better than even that. They talk to each other. Did you ever write a letter?"

Joy looked very sober. "Mr. Randolph," she said, humbly, "I don't know how to write."

"That don't know is easily conquered," Mr. Randolph said, with an encouraging smile. "A patient little hand and a watchful pair of eyes will

soon master the mysteries of caligraphy. I mean, in plain English," he explained, laughingly, as he saw Joy's puzzled face, "writing."

"I will try very hard to learn," Joy promised, "as soon," she added, with a tiny sigh, "as I can go to school."

"I am sure you will try," Mr. Randolph said. "Well, Joy, Miss Bess and I want you to write your first letter to us, and as you will want paper and pens when you write we are going now to find them." Even as Mr. Randolph spoke the carriage stopped.

"Here we are," he said. "Now we will improve upon the old adage, 'In time of peace prepare for war,' and while we can still converse we will prepare for correspondence."

Joy felt very much as if she were living in "Wonderland," but she said nothing, and with a demure little face followed her kind friends into the beautiful bookstore at which they had now stopped, and then stood quietly by them while they made their purchases.

Those purchases were evidently a pleasure to them both. A durable and handsome writing-desk was first selected, and then a quantity of nice stationery; a very pretty pen-holder came next, with pens and lead-pencils. And then a dainty paper-cutter was added. "For you may have sometimes to cut the leaves of a book or of a

magazine," Mr. Randolph said, "and I want you, my little gossip, to learn to do everything in the neatest and best way."

The desk was furnished at last. "And now," Mr. Randolph said, "I have one more purchase to make. Joy, have you a Bible?"

"Yes," Joy answered, "I have one that was mamma's."

"Is it like this?" And Mr. Randolph took up a beautiful Oxford Bible. "Has it references here, on the margin, and a concordance, like this, attached?"

"No, it has only plain reading," Joy answered.

"Then, I think—though I want you to treasure your mother's Bible sacredly—that a Bible like this one will be better for you now. I want you to be a Bible student, my little girl, and whatever else you may leave unread I want you to promise to read your Bible daily. Will you?"

"Yes," Joy said, softly, "I do now."

Mr. Randolph smiled, and without further remarks selected and paid for the Bible.

"Now, we'll go home," Miss Randolph said, as they left the store, and the next hour was very happily spent in her pleasant bric-a-brac room.

It was almost time for Joy to return to Mrs. Rothmer's when Mr. Randolph unwrapped the new Bible, and going to his sister's writing-desk called Joy to his side.

“If there had been time,” he said, “your name should have been embossed on this Bible, Joy ; but, as we could not wait for that, I am going to write it here.”

And, while with happy eyes Joy watched him, Mr. Randolph wrote her name and the date on the fly-leaf.

He paused a moment then, and still holding the pen looked with kind and thoughtful eyes at the little girl.

“What would you like me to write for your motto, Joy ?” he asked.

“What is a motto, Mr. Randolph ?” Joy asked, with quick interest.

He smiled. “I had forgotten what a searcher after knowledge you are,” he answered. “Well, my little gossip, a motto is a beautiful or a wise thought, expressed in a few words, and sometimes chosen by families or by persons as a sign, or a reminder, of what is, perhaps at once, their duty and their privilege.”

“Have you a motto, Mr. Randolph ?” Joy asked, a little shyly.

“Yes,” he said, gravely, “I chose my motto long ago, when I was a boy.”

Joy hesitated a second, and then said, with timid but pretty earnestness, “I wish I knew it.”

“Do you ? My dear mother knew it, and my sister knows it, but no one else on earth. But I

will tell it to you. It is only two little words —‘I obey.’”

Joy's bright face expressed great surprise. “Why,” she asked, with childish simplicity, “do men have to obey?”

“Yes,” Mr. Randolph said, with gentle seriousness, “there is always one—our Father in heaven—whom they are bound to obey. My mother—” with a tender, lingering emphasis on that word—“used to tell me, that he only was a true king who could truly obey.” He was silent for a minute, and then, turning from the old memories his last words had awakened, he asked with a smile, “But what shall be your motto, Joy? What will you choose as expressing the one great purpose of your life?”

With innocent and glad eyes Joy looked into Mr. Randolph's face. “God is so good to me,” she said, simply, “and everybody is so kind, don't you think I might choose ‘I give thanks,’ for my motto?”

Prompted by a sudden impulse, Kingman Randolph stooped and just touched his lips to the child's pure brow. “May you be true to that motto, through all the coming years, my little girl,” he said, “and may your faith, even in life's darkest days, find something for which to give thanks.” Then taking up the pen he had dropped, he wrote in the Bible, beneath Joy's name,

“In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God.” 1 Thessalonians 5: 18.

“Now, it is certainly time for us to let you go,” he said, as after rewrapping the Bible he looked at his watch. “And I must leave you here, for I have an engagement for the next hour. Good-bye, my little gossip. Be good, and do good. Learn all you can, laugh all you can, and when you feel like crying remember your motto. Nay, I can allow no tears; you must remember that motto, now,” he said, with kind authority, as he saw the mist that was dimming the sunshine in Joy’s eyes; and drawing her to his side he kissed her once or twice and then left her in Miss Randolph’s care.

The remainder of that afternoon was like a confused dream to Joy. There was a hurried return, with Miss Randolph, to Mrs. Rothmer’s house. And then there were tender farewells from Miss Randolph, and Mr. and Mrs. Rothmer. There was a rapid drive to the wharf where they were to take the boat: there were a good many anxious moments, in which Aunt Letty—armed with her band-box and umbrella—rushed about looking after her baggage, and securing her state-room, and Joy followed her, anxiously carrying the basket in which Gray-friar was evidently rebelling fiercely against his fate.

At last, just as the western sky was growing

bright with a lovely spring sunset, there was a peal of bells, and a creaking of ropes and machinery : the boat started and Joy went onward with it to a new home.

CHAPTER XV.

NEW SCENES.

“Lives that are earnest more beautiful grow
Out of a childhood in beauty begun.”

JOY felt like a reader who had turned a new leaf in a beautiful story, when her life in Spring Valley fairly began. It was a very plain and simple country life, but it was just what the child needed. She never wearied of it: with each new day she found something new to wonder over, or to delight in.

Aunt Letty moved into the small cottage that belonged to her, and went briskly to work to make a home for herself and Joy. Her means were limited, but still, as she cheerfully said, they were ample enough to allow her each day a cup of tea for herself and one for a friend, and as long as Aunt Letty could indulge her hospitable disposition she could be content.

Joy was left solely in Aunt Letty's care, and was, in fact, entirely dependent upon her. Mr. Stanmore, when he departed for England, felt very confident that he would return in a few

months. "And then, Aunt Letty," he said, hopefully, "we will have a settlement. Keep an exact account of Joy's expenses. I expect to pay you for everything, but your kindness, when I return."

"Humph!" Aunt Letty replied, in her dryest and most matter-of-fact voice, "I reckon your expectations will always be the largest part of your wealth, Richard; and I guess you will have to pay the most of your debts with them. But you needn't worry about Joy," she proceeded more graciously. "It doesn't cost much money to support a child in the country. Joy will thrive on pure air and sunshine and rich milk, as she never has thrived yet; and while I live I will take care of her. You may feel as sure of that as you do of making a fortune." So Aunt Letty had promised, and that promise she now faithfully performed.

Slowly but surely the spring advanced, and soon Spring Valley, with its orchards and shade trees, was like a lovely bower. Birds sang from morning until night about Aunt Letty's cottage, and Joy, with a heart almost as free as a bird's, played through the livelong day, slept soundly all night, and grew in a few weeks as brown—to use Aunt Letty's words—as a russet apple, and as plump as the shy quail she sometimes saw and frightened in her woodland rambles.

Health was Aunt Letty's first desire for her

little charge, for she wisely said that a girl with an aching body was like a violin with broken strings—you'd get no good from either until they were mended. And for her part, she must confess that she had no patience with all that fine talk about delicate people being interesting. She didn't believe that Adam and Eve were delicate when they were created; neither did she believe that the millennium would come until folks had learned that health was a talent given by the Creator, and one for which they were, in a great measure, responsible.

So, in her homely but sensible way, Aunt Letty argued, and Joy was soon an excellent illustration of the wisdom of her theories.

But as she grew strong and healthy, Joy's active little mind began to do a good deal of very serious thinking.

"Aunt Letty," she asked, suddenly, one sunny morning as she sat on the kitchen door-step playing with Gray-friar, "how much play do you suppose little girls ought to have in a year?"

"Hum," Aunt Letty answered, as she made a frantic dive into a corner with her broom, after what proved to be only the suspicion of a cob-web, "it is my opinion that they ought to have all they can get. They will have work enough to do when they are old."

"Yes, I suppose so," Joy said, soberly. "But,

Aunt Letty, don't you think we ought to study when we are little, so that we may know how to do good work when we are old?"

"Humph!" Aunt Letty said, with some sharpness, "I've seen enough to know that it ain't always them that has the most book-learning that can make the best bread. But I suppose I know what you mean, child," she continued more gently, "and I must confess that I've been thinking about it myself."

"Well?" Joy said, in a voice that was in itself an interrogation point, "well, Aunt Letty?"

"I don't know," Aunt Letty answered, "whether it's well or whether it isn't, Joy. You ought to go to school; I suppose that is as certain as that you ought to be a good girl; but then, you see, there is no free school near enough for you to walk to it, and to go to the select-school will cost money."

"How much?" Joy asked, eagerly.

"Fifty cents a week; and fifty cents a week is a good deal for poor folks."

"Why, are you poor, Aunt Letty?" Joy asked in surprise. "I never thought you were."

"Well, I am not troubled to know where to invest my surplus money," Aunt Letty answered, grimly.

Joy did not speak again for some minutes, but she went on with her thinking.

“Is there a select-school now?” she asked soon.

“Yes, Miss Primrose keeps it. She don’t have vacation until August, and she begins again in September.”

“And it is only May now, and I could go till August for fifty cents a week,” Joy said, hurriedly. “Aunt Letty, how do you think I could earn fifty cents a week?”

“It is of no use to think of impossible things,” Aunt Letty answered. “You couldn’t do it, child, and that ends it.”

Joy was silenced for a little while, but she was not convinced. “Aunt Letty,” she said soon, in an eager little voice, “I’ve thought of a plan.”

“Hum, yes,” Aunt Letty said, slowly, “most people can think of plans, but the thing is to make the plans—after you’ve thought of them—work.”

“I can make this plan work, I know,” Joy said, with confidence. “Aunt Letty, didn’t Mrs. Martin tell you the other day that she wanted to find some one to sew her carpet-rags?”

“Yes.”

“And didn’t she say she would give two cents a ball?”

“Yes,” Aunt Letty said, again.

“Then,” Joy said, with much determination, “I’ll sew them. I will get up early in the morning, and I’ll sew those carpet-rags. Aunt Letty,”

in a business-like tone, "how many balls do you suppose there would be?"

"Well," Aunt Letty said, with some interest—for she was beginning to see that Joy's plan was not outside the limits of possibility—"Well, it is to be a large carpet, and I shouldn't be surprised if there were a hundred—and more—balls."

"A hundred balls!" Joy repeated, while she called all the knowledge of arithmetic that she possessed into service, "that would be two hundred cents, wouldn't it, Aunt Letty?"

"Yes."

"And how long, for two hundred cents, could I go to school?" Joy asked, anxiously.

"Can't you divide two hundred by fifty?" Aunt Letty asked, with a shade of pity in her tone. "Well, then, you do need to go to school, Joy; that is as true as that water runs down hill; for two hundred cents you could go four weeks."

"Four weeks," Joy said, with the delight of a child to whom four weeks seemed a long time, "I could learn a great deal in four weeks, Aunt Letty. I am sure I could learn to write. And then, Aunt Letty, after I've sewed the rags maybe I'll find something else to do."

"Yes, maybe," Aunt Letty answered, in an encouraging tone, "folks generally find what they look for—if they look in the right places—and where there's a will there's a way."

There was a will at least in Joy's case. That very day she went to Mrs. Martin's and timidly stated her desire to sew that lady's rags. And Mrs. Martin, pleased with her gentle and modest manners, cheerfully granted her request.

The rags were already cut, Mrs. Martin said, and Joy would only have to sew them ; and to sew carpet-rags required more patience than skill with one's needle.

That business settled happily, Joy's next move was to call on Miss Primrose, and ask admission to her school. That call was also successful, and it was arranged that Joy should begin her school-life the next day.

Four weeks went rapidly by. The carpet-rags were sewed—every one of them by Joy's own little hands—and at the end of the month the little girl had fulfilled her own prediction, and made an excellent beginning, and learned a great deal, for a child. Above all, she had, to her great satisfaction, learned to write. Only with a lead-pencil and very awkwardly, it is true, but still, well enough to enable her to fulfil her promise, and write her first letter to Miss Randolph.

The writing of that first letter was a very important labor of love to Joy ; and one Saturday afternoon, when the June sunshine, with its golden lights and dreamy shadows, was falling, like the

blessing it truly was, around Aunt Letty's cottage, she took her cherished writing-desk and went into the garden. She had a favorite seat under the wide-spreading branches of an old apple-tree; and there, while the air around her was sweet with rose and clover scents, with great painstaking she accomplished her task. She had no model, for, with the exception of one or two hasty scrawls that Aunt Letty had received from her father, she had never even seen a letter. But she had plenty of imagination, and a loving little heart, and without preface or apology she wrote just as she would have talked. This is what she said :

"I have learned to write, Miss Bess and Mr. Randolph, and I have learned to spell pretty well, and now I am going to write my first letter to you. I like Spring Valley. I think it is a good place for children, for there are flowers and birds everywhere, and I guess it is a good place for cats, for Gray-friar seems very contented here.

"Aunt Letty and I live alone in a little bit of a house. Aunt Letty says we haven't much gold in it; but I guess that doesn't matter, for we have the goldenest sunshine out-doors, and sometimes, when I am out in it, it seems to me just like God's hands spread over me. I feel very safe here, and I guess we are always safe in God's hands, don't you?

"I have been to school to Miss Primrose for four weeks. It costs fifty cents a week to go to school; but I sewed carpet-rags, and got two hundred cents, and now I am going to do something else to make money: I am going to pick berries. They will be ripe soon, and I can get six cents a quart for all I can pick. Don't you think that good pay?

"I read my Bible every day. Sometimes it seems very strange to me, and I don't know what it means, but I most

always find something about the Prince of Peace and then I'm satisfied.

"Dear Miss Bess, I wish I could see you and Mr. Randolph, but I think of you every day, and I love you both dearly, dearly, dearly. I'm very well. Aunt Letty says my face is as round as a ball, and as brown as a nut, and I'm so happy that when I pray I keep saying my motto all the time.

"I don't know how grown people end their letters, so I guess I'll just say once more that I love you, and then tell you who wrote this letter. It is from the little girl you were so kind to.

"JOY STANMORE."

The sealing and directing of that letter cost Joy a good deal of trouble, but it was done to her satisfaction at last, and in due time the important epistle reached Miss Randolph's hands, and was read by her and her brother with many smiles and yet with an occasional sigh.

"Just think, King, of that child's having to sew carpet-rags and pick berries to pay for her tuition. It seems like—"

"Well, what?" Mr. Randolph asked as his sister paused.

"Like a great mistake," Miss Randolph answered. "That child would grace a palace, and to think of her being—"

"Well, where?" Mr. Randolph asked, gravely, as his sister again left her sentence unfinished.

Miss Randolph smiled, though something like a tear glistened in her eye. "I know what you are thinking, King," she said, "and I believe, as firmly as you do, that the dear child is safe in our

heavenly Father's care. But sometimes it does seem strange to me—doesn't it ever to you?—the way God polishes his jewels and refines his gold."

"Yes, but it is the right way," Mr. Randolph answered. "God's hands are very safe ones, Bess, and in them a pearl will lose none of its purity."

Miss Randolph was silent for a while and her brother, with Joy's letter in his hand, walked thoughtfully up and down the room. "King," the young lady said, suddenly, "God polishes his gems, I know, but he does it often through human workmen. Don't you believe there is something for us to do here?"

Mr. Randolph smiled. "I was just thinking of that, Bess," he answered. "If Mr. Stanmore is successful in his attempt to introduce his machine in England he will—as I understood from Mr. Rothmer—return in a few months, and then he will, of course, be able to place his child in some good school. But in the meantime I think, with you, that we can do something. This rag-sewing and berry-picking can do the child no harm, but she is very young to have to plan so carefully and consider ways and means so closely. I believe a little sense of responsibility is good for every child, but I would spare Joy from anxiety as long as possible. If I could I would like to

go to Spring Valley this summer, but, since that is impossible, I will write to that Miss Primrose—it is fortunate Joy gave us her name—and enclose a check large enough to pay for the child's tuition until next January. Probably by that time, if not much sooner, Mr. Stanmore will be home. But if he is not, or if his prospects have not brightened, you and I will then constitute ourselves a committee of ways and means, and consider what to do next."

"Will you let Joy know her benefactor's name?" Miss Randolph asked.

"No," her brother answered, quietly, "that is not necessary."

"I wonder what she will say about it when she writes her next letter," Miss Randolph said. "King," she asked, with a smile, "tell me truly, do you think Joy has any faults?"

"Yes, plenty of them."

"Since you are so sure, I wish you would tell me what they are," Miss Randolph said. "I must acknowledge that I cannot name any."

"She has them, though," Mr. Randolph said, seriously. "There has been nothing to develop them yet, but for her, as for every one, the testing time must come some day. You may be sure that the germs of pride are in her heart, and pride, I sometimes think, is the root or first beginning of almost every fault."

“That does not argue very favorably for her future,” Miss Randolph said, with some dissatisfaction.

“It does not argue unfavorably,” her brother answered, “for, if the germs of serious faults are in her heart, there is also implanted in her heart a faith in a Saviour, who is strong enough to conquer those faults. Joy is, as she so innocently says, in safe hands. We can trust her in them, sure that God’s will concerning her is to be fulfilled. And God’s will is but another name for God’s love.”

Mr. Randolph’s kind intentions regarding Joy were speedily executed. A few days later Joy, to her unbounded surprise and delight, was told by Miss Primrose, that though she might pick all the berries she pleased, she would not need any of the money so earned to pay for her tuition, for that, for the remainder of the year, would be paid by a friend.

Joy did not urge Miss Primrose to tell her the name of her unknown friend, and indeed her want of that knowledge did not trouble her much. She simply, with a child’s glad trustfulness, accepted the gift as another token of her heavenly Father’s love. When she wrote next to Miss Randolph, through smiles and tears, that lady read :

“The wonderfulest and the most beautifulest thing has hap-

pened to me, dear Miss Bess. Somebody has paid all my schooling until January. I don't know who has done it, but I know God knows. And so, when I say my motto, I feel sure that God will let that kind friend know that I think of him too when 'I give thanks.' ”

CHAPTER XVI.

PRAYING AND PLANNING.

“Faith may climb the ladder, Prayer,
Each step an answer given,
Each round inscribed, ‘Much more than this,’
Up to the gates of heaven.”

JOY'S first summer in Spring Valley passed like a beautiful holiday, to which, through all her after life, she looked back with pleasure. She had confidently expected that her father would return in the early autumn; but the sheen and shine of the torrid months changed, slowly but surely, into the dreary shut-in days of winter, and still Mr. Stanmore remained abroad. His were the usual experiences of an inventor: encouragements and discouragements met him by turns; one day he would be elated with hope, and the next day enduring torture in the dungeons of despair. He wrote occasionally, and always with much affection, to his little daughter; but his resources were still too limited to allow of his sending home any remittances, and Joy remained dependent upon Aunt Letty.

Mr. Rothmer, after an interview with Mr. Stan-

more in London—in which he had dealt very generously with him—had confided his interests in the machine to the care of his lawyer, leaving him instructions to aid Mr. Stanmore in every possible way.

“I have no doubt of your final success, Stanmore,” Mr. Rothmer said, when he bade him good-bye, “and I hope, some day, to congratulate you on your triumph. But I have a serious question on my mind that I must settle before I can attend again to business. I have arranged all my worldly affairs, and am going now with my wife to Palestine. There—if anywhere on earth—the problems that perplex me will be solved. Your little girl, I believe, is safe with your relations. Tell her, when you write to her, that her Israelitish friends are studying the ‘between places.’” And with a smile, that scarcely brightened the gravity of his face, Mr. Rothmer wrung Mr. Stanmore’s hand and said farewell; and months and even years passed before the two men met again.

Changes, unexpected and serious, came that autumn to the Randolphs. Dr. Randolph was stricken with paralysis and died suddenly. Miss Randolph, who had been engaged for a long time, was married quietly and went out to China to reside, and Mr. Randolph, who was studying medicine, decided to go to Germany to complete his studies.

Kind farewell letters from both Miss Randolph and her brother came to Joy; they sent her a package of carefully selected books, and Mr. Randolph, though pressed with many cares, took pains to see Mr. Rothmer's lawyer and inquire about Mr. Stanmore, and the probability of his being able to educate his daughter. The lawyer, who had—as it happened—just heard from Mr. Stanmore, showed his letter to the young man: it was written in one of Mr. Stanmore's most hopeful words, and was full of rose-colored anticipations. Judging from that letter there was no doubt that Joy's father could abundantly provide for her; so Mr. Randolph dismissed all gloomy fears for his little favorite from his mind.

Just before Christmas Miss Randolph—now Mrs. Maynard—went to her new home, her brother sailed for Germany, and Joy was left in the little Spring Valley cottage, with but one friend in America to whom she was an object of especial interest, or to whom she could look for assistance and protection.

She was eleven years old now, and on her eleventh birthday, at the close of that day's school, she was told by Miss Primrose that the money paid for her tuition by her unknown friend was now exhausted. That little piece of information seemed to Joy a very unwelcome and disagreeable birthday present; and the face she showed Aunt

Letty on her return home was a very sober one. But she said nothing of her trouble until their simple supper was over, and the dishes—which it was her duty to wash—had been neatly put away. Then, when the lamp was burning brightly on the little centre-table, and the fire in the old-fashioned Franklin stove was cheerily snapping, she took Gray-friar in her lap, and sat down beside Aunt Letty, who was knitting contentedly in her chintz-cushioned rocker.

“Aunt Letty,” the little girl said, gently, “I have got to earn some more money.”

“I have no objections,” Aunt Letty said, dryly, “providing you know how to do it.”

“But that is just what I don’t know,” Joy said, with a choking sensation in her throat. “Can’t you help me to think of some way, Aunt Letty? Please do, if you can.”

“What do you want money for?” Aunt Letty asked. “Is that strange money, that was sent Miss Primrose for you, all gone?”

“Yes,” Joy said, dolefully.

Aunt Letty clicked her needles, and knit faster than ever, while Joy stroked Gray-friar’s soft fur, and listened, with a sad face, to his contented purr.

One or two tears gathered and fell—noticed only by Gray-friar who stirred uneasily as they fell upon him—but, then, with a misty little smile, Joy looked up at Aunt Letty.

"I had forgotten," she said. "Mr. Randolph told me, when I felt like crying, to remember my motto, and I guess this is a good time to obey him, don't you, Aunt Letty?"

Aunt Letty knew Joy's motto, but at that moment she felt no sympathy with it.

"What have you got to be thankful for?" she asked, testily.

"That I've got you, Aunt Letty, and have been to school so long," Joy answered, while she winked away a tear, and smiled with praiseworthy determination.

"Oh!" Aunt Letty ejaculated, as she jerked her yarn. "Well," she remarked, in a moment, "I suppose there's two sides—one dark, one bright—to most everything."

"Well," Joy said, cheerfully, "let's look for my bright side, Aunt Letty. Let's try to find something I can do."

Aunt Letty still looked despondent. "You might as well try to find the pot of gold at the foot of the rainbow, as to think of making money with your little hands, at this season of the year," she said. "There are no berries to pick now, and you can't cut wood, nor shovel snow like a boy. I am very sorry for you," she added, feelingly, "and I wish I could afford to send you to school, Joy, but—though I am just as saving as I can be—I can't make my money do more than feed and

clothe us, and I don't see nothing for you to do, but to wait till your father comes home, or, maybe—" with an accent expressive of great doubt on the maybe—"sends you some money."

Joy did not answer. It was near bedtime now—for they kept early hours in the little cottage, and soon she brought her Bible for the evening reading. She was reading the New Testament through in course, and her chapter that night was the last one in Philippians.

In a clear sweet voice she read aloud, "Rejoice in the Lord always: *and* again I say, Rejoice."

With a face that grew brighter every moment the little girl looked up at Aunt Letty. "Rejoice means to be glad," she said, simply, "and it says here that we must rejoice always; so I must be glad, Aunt Letty, though I cannot go to school."

"Yes, if you can be," Aunt Letty said.

Joy read on:

"Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God."

Joy stopped again in her reading and looked at Aunt Letty. "Does to 'be careful' here mean to worry?" she asked.

"Yes, I suppose so," Aunt Letty answered.

Joy looked down again on the page before her.

"Then it is wrong to worry," she said, thoughtfully, "for God says, Be careful for nothing. So

I must not worry because I cannot go to school. But—" she went on slowly as she scanned the next line—" 'with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.' That means," she concluded reverently, "I must tell God what I want, and then leave everything to him."

Joy closed her Bible, sat silent a few moments, and then knelt down and prayed softly.

"Dear Lord, I know you are my Father in heaven, and I know you are taking care of me, and will give me everything I need that is good for me. I want to go to school very much, and I want to find some way to make money, so that I can pay Miss Primrose for teaching me. But I won't worry, dear Lord. I only ask you to help me, if you think it best, and I do give you thanks for keeping me so safe, and letting me go to school so long." Joy ended her simple prayer, and went to bed, and nothing more was said in the cottage that night.

In the early morning of the next day, as the little girl lay snuggled down among the soft blankets beside Aunt Letty, a sudden thought came to her, that made her call hastily, "Aunt Letty, Aunt Letty! are you awake?"

"Hey, what is it?" Aunt Letty asked, as she slowly regained her scattered senses.

"Aunt Letty, I've thought of something."

"I dare say," Aunt Letty replied. "You will

never have to whistle for want of a thought, Joy. Well, what is it?"

Joy did not say what it was, but she asked instead, "Aunt Letty, can't I read pretty well?"

"Yes," Aunt Letty said, "I'd as lief hear you read as to hear the minister, Joy."

Joy laughed with delight. "Then, I guess I can read well enough to do what I want to," she said. "Aunt Letty, you know that poor lady who is almost blind, don't you?"

"Do you mean Mrs. Gifford?" Aunt Letty said. "You needn't call her poor, Joy. She has more dollars to-day than I have ever had pennies in all my life."

"I mean poor because she is almost blind," Joy explained pitifully. "Well, Aunt Letty, do you know she wants some one to read to her?"

"Yes. I think that is very likely," Aunt Letty answered, without as yet perceiving Joy's drift.

"She wants somebody to read to her," Joy repeated, "and she will pay the person who reads to her. Aunt Letty, don't you believe she will take me?"

"You," Aunt Letty exclaimed, "why, child, you might as well offer to help the minister preach his sermons. You are too little, and too young. She won't believe that you can read well enough; and then how can you go to school if you read to her?"

"I might go half of each day," Joy suggested in a sobered voice.

"And read the other half?" Aunt Letty asked. "Joy," she said, admiringly, "what a child you are! You can see your way to do things so plainly, that I do believe you'd thread a needle if it didn't have any eye."

Joy felt a little discouraged that Aunt Letty showed so little faith in her scheme; but that morning, after breakfast, when the house was in order for the day, she went to Aunt Letty and asked, pleadingly, "May I do it?"

"Do what?" Aunt Letty asked.

"Read to that blind Mrs. Gifford?"

"I don't believe she will take you, Joy, but if your heart is so set on it, I suppose there will be no harm in your trying."

"I suppose," Aunt Letty soliloquized rather sadly, as Joy ran off to prepare for her call, "I suppose that child—like all the rest of us—must learn to bear disappointments, and it is my opinion that she will be disappointed to-day."

Happily unconscious of Aunt Letty's gloomy predictions, Joy dressed herself neatly, in one of the pretty dresses Mrs. Rothmer had given her, and then started on her errand.

Mr. Gifford was a wealthy manufacturer, and his home was one of the most beautiful in Spring Valley. His wife was an invalid and, as Joy had

said, almost blind. Joy had heard her school-mates speak of the family, and it was in that way she had learned that Mrs. Gifford wanted a reader.

She felt very hopeful when she started for Mrs. Gifford's, but her heart beat very fast, and her steps grew slower and slower as she approached the house. She had just reached the steps that led up to the front door, when a great dog rushed out at her with frantic barks and leaps. Too frightened to go on, Joy turned to run away, and bewildered and half blinded by her terror she ran directly into the arms of a well-grown boy, who was coming towards her.

"Hallo!" he exclaimed. "What is the matter? Did you think the wolf was coming to eat Little Red Riding-hood? The dog won't hurt you. He's as gentle—as gentle—as you are," the boy said, as he eyed the trembling child. "See here, how well trained he is." And standing still, the boy ordered, "Down, Captain; down, I say," and the obedient animal crouched at once.

"There, you see, he is all right," the boy said, kindly, to Joy. "Now, tell me, what do you want?"

"I want to see Mrs. Gifford," Joy said, while she trembled nervously and felt half inclined to cry.

"My mother. Do you? Come, then, we'll go and find her." And without more words the boy

led the frightened child into the house, and then up-stairs, and into a pleasant sitting-room where a lady was resting on a lounge.

“Mamma,” the boy said, “here is somebody—I guess it is Little Red Riding-hood—come to see you.”

Mrs. Gifford smiled pleasantly, and very shyly Joy approached her and placed her little hand in the one extended to her.

Mrs. Gifford felt the little hand, and then said, in a sweet voice, “You are a little girl, I think ; but I don’t know you, do I?”

“No, ma’am,” Joy stammered, “I’m Joy Stanmore.”

Mrs. Gifford waited a moment, and then, as Joy said no more, she asked, kindly, “What do you want, Joy?”

Joy hesitated. Now that the trial moment had come, she found it very hard to tell her errand ; but with a great effort she succeeded in whispering, “I want to read to you, if you please.”

“Read to me!” Mrs. Gifford repeated, in surprise. “What has made you think of that, Joy?”

Joy’s throat felt full of lumps ; her cheeks were burning, and her lips trembled so she could scarcely speak. But Mrs. Gifford waited for her answer, and she managed to say : “I heard you wanted a reader, and I want to make some money so I can go to school.”

Mrs. Gifford smiled. "Yes, I understand," she said, gently. "My little girl, I do want some one to read to me. But I think you are too young. I am afraid you could not read the books I want to hear."

"Couldn't I try?" Joy ventured to say.

"Yes, do let her try, mamma," said the boy, who had stood by watching attentively.

A sudden thought seemed just then to occur to Mrs. Gifford.

"Walter," she said, persuasively, "if I let this little girl come for an hour or two a day to read to me, will you come in and listen?"

The boy's face expressed surprise and a little annoyance. "Books are stupid," he said. "But, mamma, what will you read?"

The lady considered a moment. "Wouldn't you like some poetry?" she asked. "Perhaps we will begin with Scott's 'Lady of the Lake.' I have been all over the country where the scene of that poem is laid, and I can describe the places, and explain the history. Come, Walter," and she laid her hand on her son's, "is it a bargain?"

"It's more of a bother," the boy said, with a laugh. "But still, mamma—if you really want me to—I guess I'll do it. I'll try to, anyway, for it would be too bad to disappoint this small mid-get."

Mrs. Gifford looked very happy as she turned

to Joy. "My little girl," she said, "I will hear you read now, and see what you can do. Give her a book, Walter."

The boy went to the table. "Here are 'Southey's Poems,'" he said, as he opened the first book he took up.

"That will do as well as anything," Mrs. Gifford answered. "I only want to try her. Find,

" 'How does the water
Come down at Lodore?'

"That, for words, is almost as good as a dictionary. Now, Joy, begin."

Joy obeyed, and soon became so interested in the plunges of the cataract, that she forgot her hearers.

"That will do," Mrs. Gifford said, when Joy finished the poem. "Now, Walter, what do you say?"

"Say," Walter answered, with boyish enthusiasm, "mamma, I think it will be a grand lark. You just name the hour, and I'll be on hand every time. I can almost see that brook tumbling, all at once, and all o'er with a mighty uproar. Joy," and the boy turned with an air of kind patronage to the little girl, "you read as easily as the water runs, and I think it will be a good deal more fun to listen to you than to read myself."

Joy did not answer; she was looking at Mrs.

Gifford, and waiting anxiously for her decision, and her delight was great when Mrs. Gifford said:

“You read very well, Joy, and you may come every day at three o’clock, and I will give you twenty-five cents for every hour you read.”

If Mrs. Gifford had crowned the child she could not have made her happier. Joy went home, feeling as rich as Aladdin, when he discovered the cave full of precious gems; and from that time, for many months, she read almost daily for one, two, and sometimes three hours, to Mrs. Gifford.

It was a great advantage to her. Mrs. Gifford was a cultivated woman, and very anxious to interest her son in literature. She took great care in selecting the books Joy read, and through those books Joy was introduced into new worlds, where every step was charming, and gained rapidly in general information and in refined and cultivated tastes.

She became a great favorite with Mrs. Gifford, who paid her so generously that the money sufficed, not only for her tuition, but for all her simple little wants. And so, very happily and profitably for her, the years went by, until three more had passed, and she stood upon the brink of fourteen years, and saw the golden gates of childhood closing behind her, and girlhood’s sunny path lying fair before her.

CHAPTER XVII.

THROUGH THE SNOW.

“God’s ways seem dark, but, soon or late,
They touch the shining hills of day.”

—*Whittier.*

THROUGH the years in which Joy, under Aunt Letty’s care, had been living so peacefully in Spring Valley, Mr. Stanmore had remained in England, slowly, but as he believed surely, overcoming his difficulties and conquering opposition. His machine had met with approval, and the demand for it was steadily increasing; and for some months Mr. Stanmore had written hopefully of an early return to America. In his last letter, dated November—just four years from the time we first saw Joy—he had promised to come some time in the next spring, and though it was now midwinter Joy was already counting the days, and hailing every mild and sunny one as a sure harbinger that spring was near.

Her birthday was the 6th of January, and when she opened her eyes that morning the wind was sweeping in fierce gusts down the hills that surrounded Spring Valley, and rattling the doors

and windows of Aunt Letty's little cottage, like an enemy, denied admission, but determined to force an entrance.

Aunt Letty was troubled with rheumatism that winter, and it was Joy's duty to make the fire in the morning, bring fresh water from the pump—that stood near the house but out of doors—and cook their simple breakfast.

Joy shivered that morning as she crept resolutely out of bed and began to dress. It was bitter cold, and when the fire was kindled and she opened the door to go for water, she found that she must face not only a cutting wind but a blinding snow-storm. The snow must have been falling all night, Joy decided, for it had drifted already in a great bank against the door, and it was with great difficulty that she forced her way out.

She floundered through the snow to the pump, only to find it frozen. She could get no water, but there was plenty of snow, and fortunately that would melt, so filling her pail with the snow, Joy went back to the house, saying, cheerfully, when she found herself once more under shelter, "I am thankful that I will not have to go out again to-day."

With quick and ready hands she prepared the breakfast, and then, as Aunt Letty did not appear, she went to call her. To her surprise and consternation, she found her very ill.

“I don’t know what’s the matter,” Aunt Letty said, as cheerfully as she could; “it’s a sharp pain that seized me just as I was going to dress, but I guess, ‘Sudden come, sudden go,’ is a true saying, Joy; so I’ll just keep still a while, and maybe I’ll feel better soon.”

With a troubled heart Joy went back to the neat kitchen. She could only pray and wait, and that anxious waiting was a severe trial for one so young and inexperienced.

As the day advanced, the storm seemed to increase in violence, and so, to Joy’s dismay, did Aunt Letty’s pain. They had no near neighbors to whom she could appeal for aid. Aunt Letty’s cottage was in a secluded lane some distance from the main road, and neighbors—as Aunt Letty sometimes said—were like riches. She had learned the value of both by having to do without them.

“I must go for the doctor myself,” Joy bravely determined, when Aunt Letty began to wish for a physician. So she made light of the storm—to the violence of which Aunt Letty in her distress had paid little attention—and, protecting herself as well as she could, she started to find the doctor, whose home was more than a mile distant.

If the storm had seemed fearful to Joy as she listened to it, while sheltered in her own warm home, it seemed doubly fearful now, as she attempted to struggle through it. The wind she

was facing drove the snow with blinding fury into her face ; the road was well-nigh impassable, and the great drifts seemed to grow deeper as the brave girl plodded through them.

When at last, weary and almost exhausted, she reached the doctor's office, it was only to find that he was not at home.

"It is very unfortunate that people will get sick in such dreadful weather," the doctor's wife said, with a feeling of pity that was quite equally divided between Joy and the doctor and herself. "The doctor's been going since before daybreak, and if he gets any rest by midnight I will be thankful. But come in and rest, child," she urged, kindly. "You'd better wait until the doctor comes, and then he can take you home."

But no, much as she needed to rest, Joy could not wait. Every moment she was away from Aunt Letty seemed to her anxious heart like an hour, and receiving a promise from the doctor's wife that she would send the doctor as soon as he came home, the little girl turned to retrace her steps.

The wind was now at her back, and that was in her favor ; but the drifts were deeper, and Joy's increasing weariness made it at every step harder for her to struggle through them. More than once the tired child stopped and felt that she could go no farther ; but the memory of Aunt Letty suffering and alone urged her along.

She was plodding wearily onward in the middle of the road, when she heard behind her a loud call.

"Hallo, there! clear the track, little girl," shouted some one. Joy stepped aside, and in doing so dropped down into a deep snow-drift, just as two men, with two strong horses and a heavy sledge, plunged past her. Joy thought, with strange indifference as she watched them, that the men were probably breaking the road, but the next minute the sledge stopped, the driver gave his reins to the man sitting beside him, and then tramped back to where Joy—who felt as if she never could rise again—still sat in the snow.

"I say, little girl," he demanded, sharply, "what are you doing here?"

"I don't—know," Joy said, in a dull, listless voice. "I b'lieve—I'm freezing."

"I believe you will, if you don't get out of this," the man said, bluntly; "here, come along with me." And taking Joy by the arm, he pulled her to her feet, shook her vigorously, and then dragged her along with him to the sledge.

"I don't know who she is, nor where she belongs," the man said, in a gruff but kind voice to his companion, who looked with much concern at the almost unconscious child, "but I couldn't leave her there to freeze."

"I should hope not," was the reply. "Here,

little girl, let me help you." And two strong arms lifted Joy, and seated her in the sledge, and then wrapped her, as warmly as possible, in the comfortable robes and blankets with which the sledge was well supplied.

All this time, Joy's face was partially covered by the old worsted nubia in which she had wrapped her head, and she felt too chilled to help herself, or even to thank her rescuers.

Now, as the sledge started, and the warmth of the fur robes revived her a little, the stranger who had lifted her into the sledge asked, kindly, "Who are you, little girl, and where are you going?"

"I am going home, to Aunt Letty," Joy said, indistinctly, through her muffler; "she's sick."

"To Aunt Letty!" the stranger repeated, in an excited tone. "Who are you, child? speak."

Joy pushed back her old nubia, and showed the stranger a very pale and anxious little face.

"I'm Joy Stanmore," she said. "I've been for—" But she said no more, for two strong and tender arms were wrapped around her, and a loving voice said, huskily,

"My precious, precious child!"

Of the remainder of that ride Joy never could give a very connected account. She remembered little about what followed, until in the evening, when—after the doctor had called and gone, and

Aunt Letty, freed from pain, was sitting in her chair—she crept into her father's arms, and rested her tired little head on his shoulder.

"My poor little girlie," Mr. Stanmore said, tenderly, "to think that, after all these years, I should come home to find you—" he stopped for a moment, and then, as if he dared not trust himself to utter all he felt, said with a laugh, "in a snow-bank."

"I am so glad you found me at all," Joy said, cheerfully. "It might have been a great deal worse than it was, papa."

Mr. Stanmore pressed his daughter's cheek lovingly against his own. "You are not changed," he said, in a satisfied voice. "The years have added a few inches to your height, but you are still the little sunbeam who used to make sunshine for me in a shady place. Would you like to go back to that old life in New York, my dear?"

"With you, papa? I would go anywhere with you."

"Even to a cupboard as bare as Mother Hubbard's?" Mr. Stanmore said, with a smile that was touched with many old memories. "Well, my darling, you shall go with me, but this time it will not be to suffer from cold and hunger. I do not think want will ever come nigh you again, my child, and—" in a voice deep with feeling—"I pray that it never may."

Aunt Letty, who had been sitting by in silence, interrupted him now. "You don't mean, do you, Richard, that you really have made your fortune at last?" she asked, with interest.

"If I have not made it, I have at least approached pretty near to doing so," Mr. Stanmore said, contentedly. "My machine is a success, and a profitable success, Aunt Letty. I have got a little fighting to do now—I believe there is never a successful machine whose patent is not sooner or later infringed—but I shall come out of the battle victorious—of that I'm positive, and in the meantime I shall be able to provide very comfortably for Joy and yourself."

"You needn't trouble about me," Aunt Letty said. "I never—as it says in the old song—dreamed that 'I dwelt in marble halls,' and I've never been unhappy because my cottage wasn't a palace. But if you can do something for Joy, now that she's growing up, I shall be glad."

"I will do everything for Joy and for you, too," Mr. Stanmore promised. "Look up, my little daughter"—and he took Joy's face in his hand and turned it so that he could look into her eyes—"tell me, what will be the first thing you will ask me to do for you?"

"Will you do whatever I ask, papa?"

"Yes, if you don't ask me to leave you in this cottage," Mr. Stanmore said, smilingly.

"I have been very happy here," Joy said, with a face that confirmed her words. "But, papa, if you can—just as well as not—I wish you would send me to school."

"Is your old thirst for knowledge still unsatisfied?" Mr. Stanmore asked, playfully. "Well, my dear, I am glad your wishes correspond so well with my intentions. You shall surely go to school, but I don't think I can send you from me to a boarding-school. I must live in the city, and I think I will take a furnished house, and Aunt Letty shall live with us and be our housekeeper, and you shall have the best educational advantages the city affords. Will that plan suit you, my little girl?"

"It could not be better," Joy said, in great delight, "if only—" and she looked a little anxiously towards the chintz rocker—"Aunt Letty will go with us."

"Of course she will go," Mr. Stanmore said, decidedly. "She need not suppose I would leave her here—much sooner than I would you—to be buried alive in another snow-storm. No, I will have you both where I can take good care of you. By the way," he continued—as if something in his last words had awakened a sudden recollection—"I met an old friend of yours on the steamer, coming over from England."

"A friend of mine!" Joy repeated. "Who, papa?"

“You cannot think?” Mr. Stanmore asked, with a smile. “Have you so many friends that you cannot remember your best one?”

“I’ve you here, and Aunt Letty there,” Joy said, with a nod towards the chintz rocker. “And I’ve Mrs. Gifford and Walter in the village. And I’ve—oh!” she cried gladly as old memories returned, “was it Mr. or Mrs. Rothmer?”

“No, neither; they are still in Palestine.”

“Then who was it, papa?” Joy asked, eagerly.

“I am afraid that friend would think your memory very poor,” Mr. Stanmore said, playfully. “At any rate his own memory seemed pretty good, so far as you were concerned. Perhaps—” and Mr. Stanmore glanced at the cat, that was curled up on a cushion that was his special property—“perhaps Gray-friar would remember him better.”

“Gray-friar! Oh!” and in her excitement Joy almost sprang from her father’s arms, “I know now. Papa, was it?—I am sure it was Mr. Randolph.”

Mr. Stanmore laughed as he drew her back to her resting-place. “You are as excitable as if you were charged with electricity,” he said. “Yes, it was Dr. Randolph. He has been in Germany and Paris studying in the hospitals all these years, he told me, and now he has returned to practice his profession somewhere in America.”

“Won’t he stay in New York?” Joy asked.

“He may,” Mr. Stanmore answered, “but I think it doubtful. His sister is still in China, and I imagine she will be a magnet to draw him west, if she does not attract him quite across the Pacific.”

“Dear Miss Bess!” Joy said, affectionately; “how much I would like to see her! Papa, some day when I am grown up, and have learned a great deal, will you take me to China?”

“It is never safe to make promises,” Mr. Stanmore said, kindly. “I know what I ought to do now, and that is to send you to bed, my little daughter. So we will thank our Father in heaven for his mercies, and then we will ‘cover the embers and put out the light.’”

Mr. Stanmore’s unexpected return was, as he had hinted, due to a lawsuit in which he now found himself involved, owing to what he considered an infringement on his patent.

On landing in New York he had come with all possible speed to Spring Valley, and he was now firmly resolved that Joy and Aunt Letty should return with him to the city. Their arrangements were soon made, and in a few days they were all established in a pleasant home in New York.

As soon as possible after their return to the city Mr. Stanmore selected a good school and entered Joy as a day-scholar, and for the next four years she was a happy and a faithful school-girl.

Mr. Stanmore's business continued much involved, but if not rich he was able to provide comfortably for his household; and Joy's life through her early girlhood was very free from shadows.

She had one disappointment soon after her return to New York that she felt deeply: Dr. Randolph called, but unfortunately both Joy and Aunt Letty were out. He left his card on which he had pencilled these few words:

"I leave New York this evening. I am going to China to see my sister. I would have been very glad to see 'my little gossip' again, but I hope she is growing in all things lovely and of good report, and, even in disappointment, I trust she is true to her motto."

With eyes that smiled through tears Joy read the little note, and then dropped it into the box where she treasured the few letters she had received from Miss Randolph. Again for years the silence, between herself and her kind friends, remained unbroken.

CHAPTER XVIII.

AVAILABLE TALENTS.

“ Just to leave in his dear hand
 Little things,
All we cannot understand,
 All that stings.
Just to let him take the care
 Sorely pressing;
Finding all we let him bear
 Changed to blessing.
This is all, and yet the way
Marked by him who loves thee best.”

—*Miss Havergal.*

JOY had just passed her eighteenth birthday, and had left school, and was studying under masters at home, when Mr. Stanmore met with a great disappointment and loss. The Supreme Court, to which his lawsuit had been appealed for a final decision, decided against him. Though he retained full possession of his own machine, he lost the royalties that he had claimed from other machines that he considered infringements on his patent; he was obliged to pay the heavy costs of the lawsuit, and to compete now, on equal terms with other inventors, who—as so often happens—had availed themselves of his plan and carried

it, perhaps, to a higher degree of perfection. There were several machines similar to his own in the market now, and once more for Mr. Stanmore life threatened to become a hard and grinding struggle with poverty.

With a heavy heart, on the afternoon that his case was decided adversely, he returned to his home. He was worn and discouraged. Sanguine as he was in temperament, he had seen his hopes so often, one after the other, fall from him, as the leaves fall from the trees in the autumn, that now he felt utterly hopeless and dejected. His prospects, as he looked forward, seemed to him very dark and unpromising. He could no longer afford to support his pleasant home in the city, and he must give it up. Joy, at the very time when he longed to do the most for her, would have to endure the trials of poverty, and he himself—no longer a young and hopeful man—must begin life anew, in some one of the Western States or Territories, where, perhaps, before other competitors followed, he might be able to introduce his machine, and retrieve his shattered fortunes.

He shrank from telling Joy of the sad changes before her, but as he entered his house she met him in the hall.

He looked at her with gloomy eyes. She had never seemed fairer and lovelier to him than at that moment, but at the same time she seemed too

delicate and precious to be exposed to any hardships.

He had spared no expense, during the last four years, in educating her, but he never had anticipated reverses, or imagined that it would ever be necessary for her to support herself; and, consequently, he never had thought of advising that she should choose some one pursuit—either a study, an accomplishment, or a trade—and thoroughly master it.

Now, as he glanced at the pretty white hands with which Joy was reaching up to straighten a picture, he felt that it would be a great comfort to him, in his trouble, if he could believe that there was some one thing those hands could do, so well and skilfully, that they could easily create a demand for their labor.

He condemned himself, and pitied his child, and would, at that moment, have avoided her if he could, but, as she heard his step, she turned towards him.

“Papa,” she said, gladly, “you are home early to-night.” But the next instant, as she noticed his pale and haggard face, her voice changed.

“Papa,” she said, as she went to him and placed her hand affectionately on his arm, “what is the matter? are you ill?”

“I am tired, and my head aches,” Mr. Stanmore said, nervously.

"Then come in here," Joy said, as she opened the door of a little room that was her own peculiar little sanctum. "Come in here, and lie down, papa." With loving hands she led her father to the lounge, and hovered about him until he was resting on his pillows.

"Is it a very bad headache, papa?" she asked, in a sympathizing voice.

"It is more of a heartache," Mr. Stanmore moaned.

Joy looked a little startled. "What is it?" she whispered, as she stooped and pressed her cool lips to her father's fevered ones. "Papa—tell me—what is your trouble?"

Mr. Stanmore groaned. "I would not tell you, if I could help it," he said, "but I have no choice. I must tell you, my poor child, and you must bear it, as well as you can. I am ruined, Joy, ruined."

There were no tears in Joy Stanmore's clear eyes, as she comprehended her father's meaning, and she did not—as he had feared—utter any loud cries and laments. She only drew her father's aching head into her loving arms, and whispered in a voice as calm and sweet as if she never had heard of trouble, "Ruined, papa, when you have me?"

"My precious child," Mr. Stanmore said, while tears, of which he had no cause to be ashamed,

gathered in his eyes, "it is for your sake I feel it so deeply."

Joy's first answer to those words was given in kisses, every one of which was like balm to her father's anxious heart; but soon she said, brightly, "You are paying me a very poor compliment, papa. Do you think I am like a wax-doll, good for nothing but to be dressed prettily and made a plaything of? Do you suppose—if trouble is coming—that I cannot bear my share of it, as well as you can bear yours?"

"I know your will is good," Mr. Stanmore said, with sad tenderness, "but how will you bear poverty, my poor child? What can you do?"

"I can pray," Joy whispered, softly.

"Papa," she continued, in a moment, "don't you remember when I was a little girl, how prayer brought us out of all our troubles? And it was worse for us then than it is now. For then I was little and delicate, and now I am grown up and strong."

"Yes, you look strong," Mr. Stanmore said, dolefully. "My dear child, if the worst comes, and you have to support yourself, what can you do?"

"Do you want an inventory of all my available talents?" Joy asked, with a smile. "Well, you shall have it to-morrow. And, in the meantime, papa, don't you give one anxious thought to me.

Do you think, when God feeds the sparrows, that he will forget me?"

Mr. Stanmore groaned. "My innocent, ignorant child," he said, "you know nothing of this hard, cruel world; you know nothing of what thousands of girls, as young as yourself, are suffering this very hour."

Joy's face paled a little, but her voice still kept its cheery sweetness.

"Papa," she said, "I know the promises of my Bible; I know that God has said he will never forsake those who trust in him. I am not afraid, papa; I believe we are safe in God's hands, even though those hands do send us what we call trouble. Perhaps we do not always call things by their right names in this world. Maybe some day we shall know that trouble is only a darkened way through which we walk to triumph."

"Trouble is at least like the magician's glass that reveals to us our comforters," Mr. Stanmore said, tenderly. "You are a brave little girl, my darling, and for your sake I will try to be brave and hopeful too."

"Then lie still a while and sleep, papa," Joy said, "and maybe when you are rested the clouds won't look quite so dark." And so, with brave and loving self-forgetfulness, the young girl soothed and cheered her father, until the first bitterness of his disappointment was past, and he was able

calmly, and without any hindrance from her, to mature his plans.

Aunt Letty at once decided that she would return to the cottage in Spring Valley. A widowed cousin, who would be glad to make her home with her, was found, and with her for a companion there was no fear but what Aunt Letty would be very comfortable.

The pleasant city home was broken up. Their furniture and Joy's piano, and many pretty things she had gathered around them, were sold. Their clothing and the books and a few other articles that they retained were packed, and one fair spring morning they left the house in which Joy had spent four happy and untroubled years, and went for a few days to an inexpensive boarding-house. Joy had promised her father an inventory of her "available talents," but he had never asked for it, and the young girl was secretly very glad that he had not; for when she began to consider seriously—not what she would but—what she could do, she found that question—as so many anxious girls have found it—very hard to answer.

She was bright and intelligent; in a certain sense well educated, and, for one so young, well read. But when she tried to put her finger—metaphorically—on some one thing she felt sure she could do thoroughly, she found it as difficult as it would be to try to capture her own shadow.

It seemed too late now to remedy the defects in her education, for it was necessary that she should decide at once upon her course, as Mr. Stanmore was anxious to leave for the West, and very unwilling to do so until she was provided for. She could go to Spring Valley and live with Aunt Letty; but that meant a life of dependence upon her kind relative, and from that she shrank. Mr. Stanmore spoke of finding a quiet and safe boarding place for her in the city or country, whichever she preferred; but Joy felt that such an expense ought not to be incurred, and after much prayerful and—when safe from her father's observation—tearful consideration, she decided, like so many other perplexed and imperfectly educated girls, to try to obtain a situation as a teacher.

The morning after they left their home, as soon as her father had gone down-town for the day, Joy secured a morning paper and going to her room locked herself in. Then she opened the paper, but before reading it she knelt by her bedside and prayed as simply and trustfully as she had done when a little child.

“Dear Lord, my Father in heaven,” she murmured, reverently, “I do give thee thanks for all the way that thou hast led me through all my life unto this hour. I give thee thanks to-day for the way in which thou art leading me now; for though I do not understand its changes I know

it must be the safest and the best way for me. But, dear Lord, if it pleases thee, open a door for me now, for thou knowest all my need. Show me the path in which thou wouldst have me walk, and give me grace to walk in it, and help me, whatever I do and wherever I go, to honor and obey thee."

As she whispered her low "Amen" Joy seemed to grow suddenly strong and hopeful, and, rising, she took the paper and looked carefully through its long lists of advertisements.

There seemed to be plenty of wants, both among those who served and those whose happier lot was to be served ; but she found nothing that promised any help to her, until on the last page of the paper she read this advertisement :

"Wanted: A nursery governess for a little girl seven years old ; must be well educated and well recommended."

"That advertisement doesn't demand nor require perfect knowledge of every ology, language and accomplishment under the sun," Joy thought, hopefully. "I love little girls ; I am sure I could teach one, and I think my teacher, Miss Gordon, would give me a recommendation. I'll go this minute."

After carefully writing the address given in the paper, Joy hurried on her wraps and started on her self-imposed errand. She went first to her

old school. Miss Gordon, the principal, was very kind, promised her every assistance in her power, and sent her off with a kiss and a loving word, that made Joy feel as if a strong hand had lifted half of her burden from her.

Still buoyed up by Miss Gordon's sympathy and encouragement, Joy found the house she was seeking, rang the bell and asked for Mrs. Preston. She was shown into an elegant reception-room, and soon a dignified lady entered. Joy felt chilled as she looked up at her. There was no warmth nor friendliness in the lady's greeting; she was cold and reserved, with a face and manner too well trained to express any emotions she did not choose to reveal.

"I am Mrs. Preston," she announced. "Do you wish to see me?"

Joy felt that if the little girl of seven were a princess royal she would not be more utterly beyond her. But she was there, and her errand must be told; so while her cheeks burned, and her voice trembled in spite of her efforts to control it, she said: "I saw your advertisement in the paper this morning, Mrs. Preston, and I have called to inquire if you still want a governess."

"Yes," Mrs. Preston answered, as she sat down and looked critically at Joy. "I have had already several applications, but none of them were satisfactory."

Poor Joy felt that it would be useless for her to hope to succeed where so many had failed. All the little speeches she had planned to say slipped from her memory, and, with a crimson and down-cast face, she sat and studied the carpet, while Mrs. Preston, at her leisure, inspected her.

"Have you ever taught?" Mrs. Preston asked soon.

"No, never," Joy acknowledged, with the belief that now she had destroyed her last claim to consideration.

Mrs. Preston, however, made no comment on her answer, but asked briefly :

"Where were you educated?"

Joy named the school. "I can refer to Miss Gordon, the principal," she said, timidly.

"Yes." The word and voice were as non-committal as possible. "Have you parents?"

"A father."

"How old are you? You look very young."

"I was eighteen last January."

"Are you fond of children?"

Joy's sober face brightened a little. "I think so," she answered. "But," she added truthfully, "I never have lived with children."

A tiny smile, that was quickly suppressed, just curved Mrs. Preston's lips.

"What is your name?"

"Joy Stanmore."

Mrs. Preston's face looked puzzled, as if she were trying to remember something. "I think I have heard your name before," she said soon, "but I cannot recall at this moment when or where. And anyway," she added, hastily, "it makes no difference. Do you wish to remain in this city?"

It was impossible to tell from Mrs. Preston's manner whether her governess would or would not remain in the city, but Joy answered with simple truthfulness: "I am not anxious to do so. I am willing to stay here or to go elsewhere, as may seem best."

"Are you a Christian?"

"I am trying to be one," Joy said with trembling lips.

"I do not want a governess for myself," Mrs. Preston condescended to explain now. "I advertised at the request of a sister in Chicago, a widow with two daughters, one a little girl. She is very particular, but I think—possibly—you might suit her. However, before I engage you, I wish to see Miss Gordon—I know her well—and I would like to have you meet a friend from Chicago to whom my sister particularly explained her requirements. Ah! there he is now," Mrs. Preston interrupted herself to remark as she heard a step in the hall. "Excuse me," and going to the door the lady called: "Doctor, come here a moment, won't you?"

"Certainly," answered a pleasant voice, and the next moment a gentleman entered the room.

"Doctor," Mrs. Preston said in a low voice, of which Joy, nevertheless, heard every word, "I have an applicant here whom I think Dora, possibly, might like, and I would like your opinion of her."

The gentleman hesitated, and, as his eyes turned towards her, Joy's embarrassment grew very painful and she longed to terminate her call. But the uncomfortable silence lasted but a moment.

"May I ask for an introduction, Mrs. Preston?" the gentleman said, quietly; but as Mrs. Preston said, "Miss Stanmore," he stopped her with a sudden movement.

"I do not think I can be mistaken," he said, as with extended hand he came to Joy's side. "Is not this my little friend of other days, Miss Joy Stanmore?"

Joy tried to answer, but her interview with Mrs. Preston had made her very nervous, and now Dr. Randolph's kind voice—recalling as it did the many kindnesses she had received from his sister and himself in the old days to which he had alluded—brought the quick tears to her eyes, and the words she would have spoken were choked with a sob.

"What is the matter?" Mrs. Preston asked. "Are you ill, Miss Stanmore?"

"She is nervous and tired, Cousin Julia," Dr. Randolph said, quietly ; "she will be better soon." And Joy verified his words by quickly controlling her emotion, and looking up at him with a smile as frank and glad as she had ever given him when a child.

"I am sorry to have been so foolish, but I was so surprised," she said, humbly.

"The surprise was mutual," Dr. Randolph answered, "but to me very pleasant. I spent most of yesterday trying to find you, Miss Stanmore, and I am truly glad to meet you here. My sister, Mrs. Maynard, is still in China. I am sure you will be interested in everything I can tell you about her, and if you are going home now, I will, if you please, accompany you."

Joy was very glad to close her interview with Mrs. Preston, and escape from her critical eyes.

"You may call to-morrow morning for my decision," Mrs. Preston said, and with the promise that she would do so, Joy left the house accompanied by Dr. Randolph.

It did not take long for him to learn the outward history of the years that had passed since he last saw his little friend. With unaffected simplicity Joy answered his few but kind questions, and told her little story. His eyes were good ; he could see for himself that the old and winning charms of face and manner were still retained ; and knowing

that through the face and manner the mind and character unconsciously, but truthfully, reveal themselves, he came to the wise conclusion that, whatever of temporal good his little friend had lost, she had lost nothing that could detract from her true worth.

His report when he again met Mrs. Preston was very favorable ; and the next morning, when Joy called, she was engaged by Mrs. Preston, and it was decided that she should start for Chicago that week ; an arrangement that was very agreeable to Mr. Stanmore, as it would enable him on his own journey west to take care of her.

CHAPTER XIX.

AFTER LONG YEARS.

“Perplexed in faith, but pure in deeds,
At last he beat his music out.”

—*Tennyson.*

ON the morning of Joy's last day in New York a gentleman entered the office of the lawyer who had conducted Mr. Stanmore's lawsuit, and asked for Mr. Stanmore's address.

“I do not know his present place of residence,” the lawyer answered, “but Mr. Stanmore has an appointment with me this morning, and I expect him very soon. If you choose to wait you can meet him here.”

With a quiet “Thank you” the stranger accepted the lawyer's offer, and had waited but a short time when Mr. Stanmore arrived.

Joy was with him, for he had promised after concluding his business with his lawyer to assist her in executing one or two errands that she shrank from performing alone.

As Mr. Stanmore hurried into the lawyer's inner office the young girl went to a window, and was standing there, looking dreamily into the street,

when the stranger—who since her entrance had observed her closely—approached and said :

“ Pardon me, but am I not addressing Miss Stanmore ? ”

Joy turned and looked into his thoughtful face. His hair was very gray, and his face bore the marks of great care, and even trial ; though it was singularly calm and peaceful in its expression.

“ Yes, I am Joy Stanmore,” the young girl said, with some hesitation, “ but—”

“ But you have forgotten the ‘ between places,’ ” the gentleman said, quietly.

If she had forgotten them she remembered them then, and her eyes flashed and her voice quivered with gladness as she exclaimed :

“ O Mr. Rothmer, how glad I am ! ”

The eyes that were watching her smiled with their old kind light, but Mr. Rothmer was silent for a minute, and when presently he spoke again it was only to say, “ You are well, I hope.”

“ Yes, perfectly,” Joy answered, with a secret feeling that beneath Mr. Rothmer’s calm manner there was something she did not understand. “ Is Mrs. Rothmer well ? ” she asked, in her turn.

“ Yes, thank you. She is anxious to see you. You will find that through all our wanderings she has not forgotten her little humming-bird. Can you not go home with me, and delight her eyes this morning, or have you other engagements ? ”

Before Joy could answer Mr. Stanmore, who had signed the two or three papers that had brought him to the lawyer's, rejoined her. The greeting between the two gentlemen was very cordial, and it was soon decided that Joy should trust her father with her errands, and go herself to visit Mrs. Rothmer.

They had but just returned home, Mr. Rothmer said, after eight long years spent in wandering over the world.

"We have seen a great deal, and learned a great deal," he said, quietly. And Joy, with a sudden thrill, remembered the message he had once sent her, and wondered if he had learned the precious truths of the "between places."

But she could not ask that question, and Mr. Rothmer said nothing that enabled her to decide it.

Mrs. Rothmer welcomed her as kindly and warmly as if between them there had been no long silence and separation, and Joy soon felt as if she had stepped into a place that had always been kept for her. Many pretty gifts, picked up here and there in her journeyings, proved how constantly and fondly Mrs. Rothmer had borne her in mind; and Mr. Rothmer's kind and tender manner showed, that to him, the young girl was an object of especial interest.

The day was spent in pleasant but desultory conversation; but late in the afternoon, just as the

twilight shadows began to gather, Mr. Rothmer called Joy to him.

“Sit here,” he said, kindly, drawing a low chair up to his side; and as she obeyed he drew from his pocket a small velvet case. “I have left Mrs. Rothmer to present all the lace and silk satisfactions she has been gathering for you,” he said, with a little smile, “but, my dear child, this little gift will show you how fondly I have remembered you, and will, I think, tell you its own story. It is but the sequel to our last conversation, if you remember that,” he added, gently, and as he spoke he laid the case in Joy’s lap.

With curious and yet tremulous fingers Joy opened it. As she raised the lid the wood fire, burning on the hearth, blazed up suddenly, and its flame quivered and played with brilliant and yet tender light upon a jewelled cross.

It mattered nothing to Joy that gems of the purest and clearest water composed that cross. She only read its precious symbolism: words were not needed: she understood at once the story it was meant to tell her, and with eyes that smiled through happy tears she looked into Mr. Rothmer’s face, and then bent forward and reverently touched her lips to his brow.

“May God bless you, my child,” David Rothmer said, solemnly, “for under him I owe the joy that has come into my life to you.”

A little later that evening he told her the whole meaning of his beautiful gift.

“The cross is—to me—too sacred for me to ever wish to see it worn as a mere ornament,” he said, “but I know I can trust you with it. I know that, when you wear it, it will be to you a sacred reminder of the source from whence comes all our good. And when you look upon its brightness I hope there will always come glad memories of the friend whom your childish hands led out of darkness into wondrous light.”

“How did it happen?” Joy asked, tremulously; “did you study the ‘between places’?”

“Yes,” he answered, with a grave smile. “When I left America, eight years ago, and went to Palestine, I took the Christian’s Bible with me. I travelled over the Holy Land. Bethlehem, Nazareth, the Sea of Galilee, Jerusalem; all the places so dear to every Jew—and dearer still to the Christian who delights to trace his Master’s steps—I visited them all. And everywhere I read the Messianic prophecies, and traced them through their slow fulfilment, until I felt forced to own that they all culminated in the Christ of the New Testament. And still I could not, perhaps”—he corrected himself with a sad smile—“would not be convinced.

“It is a hard thing, my child, to renounce the faith of a lifetime—and the faith of all your

kindred through many long generations—even though it be false. It is hard for human hearts to endure all that a converted Jew must endure: hard to break away from precious associations, and to feel the falling off of long loved friends. All this”—and David Rothmer’s voice trembled and grew husky—“a Jew, who renounces the faith of his fathers, must nerve himself to undergo. If ever”—and David Rothmer laid his hand solemnly on the young girl’s head—“you feel inclined, my child, to condemn my people for refusing Christianity, ask yourself, if your faith would be strong enough to enable you to make the sacrifices they must make when they forsake Judaism? And then—taught humility, perhaps, by the sad consciousness of your own weakness—learn to regard them with the charity that judges not, but trusts them to him who has promised that they shall yet be gathered into his fold.”

“I will, I will,” Joy tearfully promised. “But,” she added, timidly, “though it is so hard for a Jew to accept Christianity, you have done so.”

“Yes, but not until after a fearful struggle,” Mr. Rothmer answered, in a tremulous voice. The memory of that struggle silenced him for a few moments, but soon he went on with his story.

“After reading the strongest evidences that I could find of the truth of Christianity, I went back

to the writings of my own people. One by one I again considered the Christian's arguments and met them with the Jew's objections. At last, while in Jerusalem, one beautiful spring day, just at the season when long ago the Passover lamb used to be sacrificed in the old temple, I took my Bible, and going out to the ruins of that temple, looked thoughtfully about me.

"All things around me spoke of desolation, and in bitter humiliation I felt forced to own that the prophecies concerning that temple had been fearfully fulfilled. Was it, in truth, because the chief corner-stone had been rejected?

"As I asked myself that mournful question, I glanced down on my open Bible and read these words: 'What think ye of Christ?'

"I shivered as I read, for I felt that the crisis of my life had come. Now, or never, I must decide for myself this solemn question, for so long the stumbling-block of my nation. Was Jesus Christ, in truth, the Messiah?

"'Put him on trial,'* something seemed to whisper to me, and weigh fairly the testimony of the witnesses who will speak in his favor.

"I did so.

"'Stand there,' I said, 'thou Jesus of Nazareth,

* I am indebted to one of Mr. Moody's sermons for this suggestion.

and now, come first, thou truthful Jewish mother : what hast thou to say ?

“As I waited, through the silence this answer seemed to come : ‘ I plead the promise of the angel, “ He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest.” ’ ”

“And now, come, Joseph, who protected his infant years, what will you say ?

“‘Another angel promise, “ He shall save his people from their sins.” ’ ”

“Next, John the Baptist, whom all men owned to be a prophet : what is your testimony concerning this meek prisoner ?

“In the hush that surrounded me I seemed to hear the words that echoed once by the Jordan :

“‘ I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me ? ’ ”

“Next, thou proud Roman centurion in Capernaum, what thinkest thou of this lowly Jesus of Nazareth ?

“With a strange humility from such haughty lips the answer came :

“‘ I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof ; but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed.’ ”

“I seemed to feel the presence of a power, at once Almighty and All-loving, but soon I went on with my trial.

“Come now, thou poor, troubled, storm-tossed

disciples upon the Sea of Galilee: who is this Master whom you so faithfully follow?

“Over the calmed waters came the answer:

“‘Of a truth thou art the Son of God.’

“And now—I said—bring forward the great army of Christian believers, who through the centuries have been travelling home to God, and let me hear their verdict.

“Like the sound of many waters ascended the song of triumph and thanksgiving:

“‘Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation.’

“Yet once again, bring hither that great testimony, the ‘witness of history to Christ;’ and what will that be?

“Wherever his name is honored there is found a fulfilment of the grand old prophecy, ‘All that see them shall acknowledge them, that they *are* the seed *which* the Lord hath blessed.’

“I could not dispute that answer, but unbelief fought hard; and again I said: ‘And now, thou patient, uncomplaining sufferer, speak for thyself. Who art thou?’

“With solemn emphasis came the answer:

“‘I and my Father are one.’

“The claim means divinity, but what says the Father?

“‘This is my beloved Son: hear ye him.’

“I trembled, as if a voice from heaven had truly spoken to me, yet still my pride rebelled.

“There is one more witness, my conscience whispered, one who was, as you are, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; one whose pride, like yours, was strong in its resistance. Come, Saul of Tarsus, do you accept this crucified Jesus of Nazareth for the Messiah?

“Through the solemn silence, with firm, unfaltering confidence came the answer :

“‘I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ; for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth.’

“I closed my Bible, and yielded my rebellious will.

“‘It is enough;’ I said; and from my humbled heart went up the prayer—that is never offered in vain—‘Lord, I believe; help thou my unbelief.’

“That was four years ago; and though, since then, I have known many trials and discouragements, I can testify to-day—with a confidence untroubled by one doubt—that the Prince of Peace has come, and that he does keep in perfect peace the mind which is stayed on him.”

Tears that were full of thanksgiving were falling on the beautiful cross in Joy’s lap when Mr. Rothmer concluded his story. One fear, however, still troubled her a little, and with some anxiety she said, “And Mrs. Rothmer?”

“My husband’s faith is mine,” Mrs. Rothmer answered. “We have found him of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write, and we know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world.”

CHAPTER XX.

NEW LESSONS.

“Heaven is not reached at a single bound ;
But we build the ladder by which we rise,
From the lowly earth to the vaulted skies ;
And we mount to the summit, round by round.”

—*Dr. Holland.*

THE next day in the early evening Joy and Mr. Stanmore left New York. Dr. Randolph had already returned to his professional duties in Chicago, and Mr. and Mrs. Rothmer intended soon to start on another long journey.

“We have few ties to bind us to any one place,” Mr. Rothmer said, “and it is our desire and intention to visit, as far as possible, the missionary stations in the world, and see, with our own eyes, where the wealth we have consecrated to our Saviour can be best used in his service. After our long denial we wish now, by every means in our power, to give him honor. We shall remain only a few weeks at longest in this city,” he added.

With a brave heart Joy bade Mrs. Rothmer and himself good-bye, and went forth to the new life that awaited her. Mr. Stanmore accompanied

her to the door of her new home in Chicago, but there he left her, and with a beating heart Joy rang the bell. A pleasant-faced servant girl answered it.

"Are you Miss Stanmore?" the girl asked. "You are to come right up-stairs to Mrs. Queen's room." And leading the way she ushered Joy into a large and beautifully furnished room. A lady sat in a low chair before the fire, bending over an embroidery frame. As Joy entered the room she just raised her eyes, gave her a cool, indifferent glance, and then resumed her work. Joy waited a minute, and then ventured to say :

"Mrs. Queen?"

"No. Miss Queen," replied the fair embroiderer without even condescending to again raise her eyes ; and Joy continued to wait near the door while, for the first time in her life, a feeling of indignation, at the cold treatment she was receiving, flushed her cheeks, and made her eyes flash with pride.

Several more uncomfortable minutes passed, and then a lady, who reminded Joy strongly of Mrs. Preston, entered the room by another door, without perceiving Joy.

"Mamma," said Miss Queen, "here is Miss Stanmore."

Mrs. Queen turned and looked at Joy. "Good-morning," she said, after a moment's cool study of the girl's crimson face ; "perhaps you had better

go to your room, and remove your wraps." And without more words she rang her bell.

"Alice," she said, when the servant appeared, "show Miss Stanmore to her room."

"The bell will ring for lunch in about an hour," she said, as Joy turned to follow the girl.

Up two flights of stairs Joy silently followed the servant, and when she reached her room she found it neat and comfortable, though very plain. Evidently the governess, while in the family, was not to be with nor of them.

Joy had a very lonely and shut-away feeling as she closed her door, and began slowly and with reluctant fingers to remove her wraps. How could she live the life before her, if the treatment she had just experienced was a specimen of what she was to continue to receive?

Through all her life, heretofore, Joy had invariably been treated with kindness and thoughtful consideration by all with whom she had been thrown in contact. She had been tenderly sheltered and shielded, and exposed to none but friendly and helpful influences. The faults, that Dr. Randolph so long ago had said were dormant in her nature, had had nothing to quicken them into activity. If she was naturally proud, quick to feel and resent slights, and capable of being severe and uncharitable in her judgments, she did not yet know it. But she had entered a new

school now, and many hard lessons awaited her. How she would learn them was known only to him who sets us no task he does not give us, if we seek it, strength to conquer.

Joy was still standing in the middle of her room, and still holding her hat—as if unwilling to lay it down—when she heard the patter of little feet through the hall. The next moment there was a fumbling at her door-knob, and a childish voice cried:

“Let me in! Let me in, I say! I want to see you.”

A little undecided whether to laugh or to cry, Joy opened her door. A little girl stood before it, and looked up at her with a very curious and expectant face. Joy waited a second and then stooped down and kissed the child.

“Are you my little scholar?” she asked, gently.

The child raised her hand, brushed the cheek Joy had kissed, and said, with a dignity comical in one so little, “Mamma does not allow the servants to kiss me.”

Joy’s eyes flashed. “I shall not offend again,” she said, angrily. But the next moment, ashamed of her hasty words, she held out her hand, and said winningly, “Won’t you come in, and get acquainted with me, my little girl?”

“I ain’t your little girl. I’m Miss Edith,” returned the wee princess, while at the same time

she condescended to accept Joy's invitation, and entered the room.

"Do you think you'll like to be my governess?" she asked, now.

"It is very doubtful," was the answer that trembled on Joy's lips. But she suppressed it, and said, instead, "I may, if you are a good little girl. Do you think you will be?"

"I don't know. I am pretty bad most of the time, I guess," Miss Edith said, wisely.

Joy looked at the sober-faced and, as it seemed to her, unnatural child with a feeling of desperation; but she made one more attempt to win her, and asked kindly, "Don't you think you will like to study and learn to read pretty books?"

"P'rhaps," was the encouraging answer, "but you've got to be very good to me, and let me do just as I want to, or else I'll have tantrums."

"Tantrums!" Joy exclaimed; "why, what are they?"

"Oh! you'll know when I have 'em," was the gracious assurance. "I bite, and kick, and scratch, and strike. Mamma says she hopes you'll be able to control me, for she is sure she can't. Do you believe you can?" And Miss Edith waited with an anxious face for Joy's answer.

"I'm afraid not," was Joy's despairing thought. But she wisely said, "We will see." And that oracular reply served to inspire Miss Edith with a

little wholesome uncertainty as to how great the new governess' talent for discipline really was.

The lunch-bell rang now, and with a funny little air of proprietorship Miss Edith led Joy to the dining-room.

Mrs. Queen, and her daughter, Miss Dora, were already there; and before the lunch was over Joy learned that the family consisted of the two ladies and her little pupil.

"Being the youngest, and a delicate child, Edith has been petted a great deal, and is—possibly—a little spoiled," Mrs. Queen explained to Joy. "She never has had an hour's instruction in her life, and you will have to begin at the alphabet. I think she is a remarkably bright child, and I am confident that, with a good teacher, she will make rapid progress. I must request you, however, to be careful not to raise any issues with her; and always, when possible, you must avoid crossing her will, for she is a nervous child, and opposition always excites her, and is, I think, very bad for her health." All this was said in Miss Edith's presence, and the child listened attentively to every word, and very soon took occasion to remind Joy "that opposition was very bad for her."

That night, for the first time in her life, Joy sobbed herself to sleep, and when she awoke the next morning it was with a burdened and oppressed heart, such as she had never known before.

But she was too young not to be hopeful. The sunshine of the beautiful spring morning cheered her ; and when, after she was dressed, she opened her Bible, the tender promise, "I, the Lord thy God, will hold thy right hand, saying unto thee, fear not," comforted and strengthened her.

The next few days passed rapidly, if not happily. Joy's time was almost constantly occupied with her little pupil. Mrs. Queen had just dismissed her nurse, and Joy very soon found that teaching the alphabet was but a small part of her duties.

It was Joy who undressed the little girl at night, and bathed and dressed her in the morning. It was to Joy that Edith was sent whenever her hair required something, or her dress needed to be changed. It was with Joy that the little girl was expected daily to walk, and in the between times there were dolls for Joy to dress, story books for her to read aloud, and amusements of various kinds to be constantly planned for the occupation of Miss Edith's play-hours.

Mrs. Queen and her oldest daughter were engrossed with society. Joy saw nothing of them, save at meals, and then they were always cool and indifferent. If they did not regard her as a servant neither did they consider her an equal, and it never occurred to them that a little friendly interest, manifested for her by them, would brighten

her lonely life, and do her the same good that sunshine does a drooping plant.

Joy knew that Dr. Randolph was living in Chicago, and when he parted with her in New York he had promised to call upon her as soon as she arrived at Mrs. Queen's. But the days went by and he did not come, and Joy wondered and grieved over what she supposed was his forgetfulness.

She soon, as her little pupil had prophesied, learned, from personal observation, the meaning of "tantrums." It was impossible for her to indulge the child in all her whims and freaks ; but a denial was sure to evoke a perfect rebellion.

Joy struggled hard to do her duty, but she was severely tried, and faith, patience, and hope seemed often to forsake her in those lonely and unhappy days.

One morning, about a month after her arrival, she was in the school-room with Edith.

"Come, Edith," she said, gently, "come and read, my dear."

Edith had insisted that morning upon bringing her favorite doll to school. Now, at Joy's call, she retreated to the farther side of the room, placed the doll in a chair, and taking a picture-book, said in excellent mimicry of Joy's tone :

"Come, dollie, be a good girl, and read your lesson."

"Come, Edith," Joy said, again.

But Miss Edith, with the cool answer, "You mustn't disturb me. I'm teaching dollie," began to repeat from memory: 'A was an apple-pie, B baked it, C cut it;'" and so on through the whole nursery jingle.

"Edith," Joy said sternly, after one or two more vain attempts to coax her, "you must obey me: come here."

"I won't, and you can't make me," Edith said, with angry defiance.

"You must come," Joy insisted, and going to the little girl she attempted to take her hand. But at her approach Edith began to scream, and throwing herself on the floor she kicked and struck with all her strength.

"I hate books," she cried, as Joy endeavored to raise her, "and I won't have lessons. I don't want to learn. Go away, you bad teacher."

And as Joy, in spite of her resistance, at last succeeded in lifting her from the floor, she turned, and with her angry little hand slapped her cheek.

If Joy had not been angry before she was undeniably angry now.

With a strength that seemed unnatural she gave the little rebel a severe shaking, and then, as she seated her with no gentle force in a chair, she said, sternly, "You will sit there until I give you leave to move."

Neither Edith nor Joy, in their contest, had heard the steps that at its beginning had paused in the open door. But now as, with a flushed and vexed face, Joy turned from the angry child, she looked up and saw Dr. Randolph standing in the doorway. Joy gave him one look, and then, overcome with shame and pain, she turned from him and burst into tears.

Dr. Randolph looked grave, but he said, pleasantly: "May I come in, Miss Stanmore?" and then he went to Edith, who was watching him with tearful eyes, at once doubtful and defiant.

"Edith," he said, "is this my good little girl?"

"No. I ain't nobody's good little girl," Edith sobbed, truthfully.

"But you know you are going to be," Dr. Randolph said, "and now I want you to tell Miss Stanmore that you are sorry you have been naughty and ask her to hear you read."

Edith hesitated. It was very hard for her to yield, but Dr. Randolph, without repeating his request, quietly waited for her to obey him, and after a few moments spent in pouting she looked at Joy.

"I'm—I'm—sor—ry. Please—hear—me," she sobbed. And then, with lamb-like meekness, she brought her book and read the lesson about which she had been so rebellious. Dr. Randolph smiled when the lesson was ended and she came timidly

to him. "I am sure you are my good little girl now," he said, "and I want you to promise to be Miss Stanmore's for the rest of this day. Won't you?"

"Will you know if I ain't?" Edith asked.

"Yes. I shall make it my business to know."

"And will you care if I ain't?"

"Very much," Dr. Randolph gravely replied.

Edith thought a moment. "I guess I will promise," she said then; "the rest of the day won't be very long, will it?"

Dr. Randolph drew her to him and whispered a few words that made her look very sober. And then he asked: "Where are your mother and sister?"

"Gone shopping," Edith answered.

"Very well. Suppose you run off now into that corner and play. I want to talk to Miss Stanmore."

Without a murmur Edith obeyed. Joy had never seen her so submissive, and she looked at Dr. Randolph with a face as surprised as it was sad. "By what spell do you subdue her?" she asked, with a sigh.

Dr. Randolph smiled. "I think I gained my power by insisting once upon her taking a bitter medicine that quickly relieved her of severe pain. Since then Edith has always believed that whatever I ask of her I ask for her own good. She is

a peculiar child, but when once her will has yielded to yours you will have no more trouble."

"It is that very will that troubles me," Joy sighed. "I cannot break it."

"And I would not have you break it," Dr. Randolph answered, seriously. "But you can direct it, and gain control of it, and you will do so when once you have won her love."

Joy drew a long breath. "I have not found her very lovable," she said, sadly.

"No, I am afraid you have not," the doctor answered. "But there is much that is interesting and lovable in her, and I believe you will yet find it so. Do you often have such scenes?"

Joy's face grew crimson with shame. "Yes, almost every day," she confessed.

"My poor child," Dr. Randolph said, compassionately. "I am very sorry. I feared it would be so, and yet I hoped for something better. But you must not feel discouraged: remember there is never a victory where there is not first a struggle. By the way, how do you like Chicago?"

"I don't know. I haven't thought much about the city."

Joy's words and voice were both very dull and indifferent, and Dr. Randolph looked at her with a concerned face.

"You find your home here a pleasant one, I hope," he said, with kind interest.

"No," Joy said, impulsively. "I hate it."

If a meteor had fallen at his feet Dr. Randolph could not have been much more surprised than he was now, at such an exhibition of temper on the part of one whom he remembered as always gentle and amiable. There was some serious reason for the present bitterness, he felt sure of that, but none the less it surprised and pained him.

"Are they not kind to you here?" he asked. "I hope," he said in a moment, as Joy remained silent, "that you will speak frankly. Remember, I feel as if I still had a little right to watch over my little gossip."

The hot tears rushed again to Joy's eyes. "O, Dr. Randolph," she owned, sorrowfully, "I know I am very wicked, but I am so disappointed; it is all so different from what I expected."

"How, in what way?" Dr. Randolph demanded.

"I am so unhappy," Joy acknowledged with a sob. "I cannot control Edith. She never obeys me without a struggle. And then I am so lonely, and feel so like a stranger here. Mrs. Queen and Miss Queen care nothing for me. They are not my friends; they never will be."

Dr. Randolph looked increasingly grave. "Do you remember your motto?" he asked, gently.

That little question touched Joy deeply. "I haven't thought of it since I've been here," she

confessed, while she hid her tearful face in her hands.

Dr. Randolph looked as if his indignation at something or some one was hard to control; but in a second he asked, kindly:

“Shall we try to find something, even here, for which to give thanks?”

“I’m afraid there is nothing,” Joy sobbed.

“Do not say that. Let us consider carefully. Is it not something that you have at least a comfortable home here, and are useful? I know you are that from Mrs. Queen’s own admission,” he insisted, as Joy made a little sign of dissent. “She acknowledged to me only yesterday that she felt safer about Edith when she left her now than she had ever done before. Can you not be thankful for that?”

“But you do not know all,” Joy said, as she gave him a pale little smile that was like a misty sunbeam struggling through clouds. “I am growing so wicked, Dr. Randolph. I feel so proud, and bitter, and hateful. I never knew before I had such a wicked heart.”

“I think I understand how you feel,” Dr. Randolph said, with grave kindness. “God’s children are all much alike, and he often has to send us trials that we may become acquainted with ourselves and learn our own evil possibilities. It is very sorrowful and humbling—such self-knowl-

edge," he continued, gently, "but it is salutary too. We learn to know ourselves, but we learn, too, to know the all-sufficiency of Christ. And such a precious lesson is worth all it costs, and is, in deepest truth, something for which to give thanks."

"But," Joy said, mournfully, "I feel so discouraged, Dr. Randolph."

"Do you remember," he answered, "how when Bunyan's dear old pilgrims were passing through the Enchanted Ground they 'struck a light?' You must do that now."

"But how?" she asked, earnestly.

"By prayer and faith," he said quietly. "There is no torch like the one faith carries."

Joy brushed away the few tears that still trembled in her eyes and gave him a grateful smile.

"I will remember," she said, humbly, "and I thank you, Dr. Randolph; you have done me good."

"As a physician ought," he said, playfully. "But why have I not been allowed to do you good before? Why have you been invisible every time I have called?"

"Called!" Joy repeated.

"This is only the sixth time," he said, quietly.

"And I thought you had forgotten me," Joy said, impulsively.

“I shall have to preach to you next upon the duty of trusting your friends,” the doctor answered, with a smile. “But, do you mean that you have not known of my calls?”

“Yes. No one told me.”

“Ah!” That little exclamation now, as in other days, meant when Dr. Randolph used it many things.

“I shall see that you are not left to suspect me of forgetfulness again,” he said, with emphasis. “And now, as a doctor, may I give you a little prescription for happiness?”

“If you will,” she said, gratefully.

“Then look for all the stars in your sky, and do not study the clouds.” And with a pleasant “Good-bye” Dr. Randolph departed.

CHAPTER XXI.

GAINING GROUND.

“We rise by the things that are under our feet,
By what we have mastered of good and gain,
By the pride deposed, and the passion slain,
And the vanquished ills that we hourly meet.”

—*Dr. Holland.*

IT would be hard to describe Joy's feelings after Dr. Randolph left her. Shame, sorrow, and penitence all united to humble her heart and send her to her knees in contrite prayer.

She had seen herself as she never had before; and if ever Joy had been in danger of thinking herself better than she really was that danger was past. She knew now that the germs of serious sins were dormant in her soul, and only needed a favorable atmosphere to develop rapidly; but while she learned that mournful truth she remembered the precious promise: “God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.”

Joy rested upon that promise, and resting there, the valley of humiliation through which she was

passing began soon, for her as for Bunyan's pilgrims, to grow bright with sunshine.

She profited by Dr. Randolph's hint about controlling Edith, and gained, by slow degrees, a strong influence over the wilful child ; and though there were still occasional battles, each battle was followed by a longer interval of peace. But this great good was not accomplished in a day. Time, as well as patience, was needed, and it was early summer before Joy began to feel that her little pupil was really submissive to her will.

In the meantime her life continued to be very lonely and isolated. Dr. Randolph called occasionally, but she never saw him alone. Mrs. Queen was always present during his brief calls, and under her critical eyes Joy was silent and constrained, and painfully conscious of appearing at a great disadvantage.

Her pride often tempted her to rebel against her lot ; it was not always easy for her to conquer herself, and sometimes it seemed to Joy that the more she prayed that she might possess and manifest the graces of a meek and lowly spirit, the more strongly the opposites asserted their power over her. It is often so in a young Christian's life, and the contrast between what we are, and what we pray to be, not only humiliates but puzzles and bewilders us.

We pray for charity, and straightway we seem

tempted, as never before, to think and to speak harshly of our acquaintances. We pray for humility, and at once pride is on the alert to notice and resent every little slight, and to suspect unkindness, often when none is intended. We pray for patience, and soon our plans are baffled, our hopes thwarted, our annoyances multiplied. We pray for thankfulness, and even as we end our prayer we begin to feel our crosses and losses, our denials and trials as never before. We cannot understand such answers to our prayers, and often, perhaps, we are tempted to think that our petitions are like hands that knock on the closed doors of vacant rooms and receive no response.

But by degrees, as we struggle, and pray for grace to overcome our temptations to doubt, we begin to understand our Father's dealings with us. And we know at last, that as the bird flies through the resistance it encounters in the air, and as the strongest trees in the forest are those that have been most exposed to storms and winds, so we, through our very conflicts with our sins, have grown strong in Christian virtues.

These were some of the lessons that Joy was learning now. They cost her many sorrowful hours and mournful tears, but they left their blessing behind them ; and the Father, who knows that character is more precious than happiness, looked on and saw that Joy was growing in grace.

One lovely afternoon, several weeks after the scene in the school-room, Mrs. Queen took Edith out for a drive, and Joy was left alone.

Too lonely and sad to care to read, the young girl put on her hat and went out for a walk.

She had not gone far when she came to a little park. It looked very pleasant and peaceful under the shade of the quiet old trees. They seemed to offer rest to her troubled mind, and Joy resolved to go in. She found a sheltered and retired seat, and, sitting down, she let the home-sick tears, she had been suppressing all day, have vent, and sobbed long and bitterly. The tears did her good; she grew calm after a while, and drying her eyes she arose to leave the park. As she did so some one behind her said, quietly, "Good-afternoon, Miss Stanmore," and Joy turned quickly and saw Dr. Randolph standing but a few steps from her.

"Have I frightened you?" he asked, as he came nearer, and extended his hand.

"No—I don't know—that is—I was just going," Joy stammered incoherently, while she wondered, with secret dismay, how long Dr. Randolph had been standing there.

"It is early yet," Dr. Randolph said, pleasantly, "and I do not believe there is any law of the Medes and Persians requiring you to hurry away. I will see that you reach home in safety. Sit down—please—I have something to tell you."

Submissively as if she were a child, Joy obeyed him, and, without appearing to notice her tear-stained face, the doctor said: "I had a letter from my sister, Mrs. Maynard, a few days ago. She is coming home soon."

"Miss Bess," Joy exclaimed, while her sad face grew bright with pleasure. "Oh, how glad I shall be to see her! That is, if I do see her," she added, soberly.

"Your eyesight is not failing, is it?" the doctor asked, gravely. "You have no fear of becoming blind, I hope."

In her surprise Joy showed him a pair of eyes that, though swollen with tears, were as bright and clear as any he had ever seen.

"No, there is nothing the matter with my eyes," she said, quickly.

"I am glad to be assured of that fact. But why, then, do you not expect to see my sister?"

Joy was silent a moment, but Dr. Randolph evidently waited for an answer, and so she said, soberly, "I hope I shall see her, 'but'—"

"Let me hear the conclusion of that sentence," Dr. Randolph insisted. "What follows but?"

"Nothing," Joy said, in much embarrassment. "Only, I was thinking that pleasant things don't seem to happen to me any more."

Dr. Randolph looked at her a moment, and then said: "Fortunately my sister's experience is

not like yours. Pleasant things do happen to her constantly ; and consequently, since I know that it will give her pleasure to see you, I feel sure that you will see her."

"I hope you will prove a true prophet," Joy said.

"How is your little pupil?" the doctor asked.

"Edith? I think she is improving."

"I know she is," the doctor replied. "I have seen her several times lately, when I have not had the pleasure of seeing you, and I know that the child is improving. Does not that fact make you feel happier?" he asked, with much kindness; "does it not seem to you something to give thanks for?"

"Yes," Joy said, "I am thankful for it, Dr. Randolph, but—"

"Another broken sentence," the doctor said, with a smile. "Miss Stanmore, don't you know that no doctor can cure a patient if he is not told the whole truth?"

"The whole truth isn't anything very serious," Joy answered, more cheerfully.

"Then it will be the more easily told," the doctor said, with gentle insistence. "You have assured me that nothing is the matter with your eyes. Now, please indulge me a little further, and let me ask—with the right of an old friend—what is the matter with yourself?"

"Nothing, please believe me, Dr. Randolph," Joy answered, in distress.

“No,” he said, in a voice as firm as it was kind, “I cannot believe you. You may be well, but you are not happy. Your name—” and his tone was very gentle now—“does not belong to you to-day. Why does it not?”

“Because,” Joy said, desperately, “because I am all wrong, Dr. Randolph.”

“When we know we are wrong, we will, if we are wise, get into the right path as soon as possible, will we not?” he asked, gently.

“Yes,” Joy said in a low voice, “if we know how.”

“I think you do know,” he said. “I am sure you do not need to be told that,

“‘Following Jesus, we cannot go wrong.’”

Joy looked at him with an humble face, that touched him more deeply than she knew.

“Yes, I do know it,” she said, “but sometimes the way seems dark, and the following hard.”

“Yes,” he answered, gravely, “and we make it harder, often, by comparing our present with a past, that may have been brighter, or else, by adding to the real burden we are carrying to-day the imaginary burden we are dreading in the future. Tell me,” he urged, with kind authority, “would you have felt so sorrowful this afternoon, if you had thought of what is really pleasant in your life to-day, and had not suffered yourself to feel home-

sick for the friends from whom you are parted now, nor to feel discouraged with sad anticipations of the loneliness you may have to endure to-morrow?"

"How could you know?" she asked, with trembling lips.

"Did you think yourself walking in a path no one else had ever trod?" he answered. "Have you forgotten the tender assurance of our Father in heaven: 'There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man'?"

She bowed her head in humble penitence. "I have," she owned. "I have felt so alone."

"And the loneliness you dreaded was worse than that you were actually experiencing," he said, gravely. "I know that such feelings will come to us all, sometimes; but if we indulge and harbor them we are sure to grow morbid, discontented and despondent."

"How can we help, sometimes, indulging them?" Joy asked.

"By learning to live as we walk," he said, with a smile. "It is step by step and the longest road is traversed at last, and so it is day by day that our life-tasks come to us, and each day has its own burden, from which yesterday's load has dropped away, and to which to-morrow's duties never will be added. May I give you"—and the doctor took out his pocket book—"a little prayer that has

been, for many years, a daily help and strength to me?"

"If you will," Joy said, gratefully. And taking a card from his pocket-book, just as the sunset threw its beautiful golden light around them, Dr. Randolph read:

"Lord, for to-morrow and its needs
I do not pray.
Keep me from stain of sin
Just for to-day.

"Let me both diligently work,
And duly pray.
Let me be kind in word and deed,
Just for to-day.

"Let me be slow to do my will,
Prompt to obey.
Help me to sacrifice myself
Just for to-day.

"Let me no wrong, nor idle word
Unthinking say.
Set thou a seal upon my lips
Just for to-day.

"So, for to-morrow and its needs
I do not pray.
But keep me, guide me, hold me,
Just for to-day."

As he finished reading, Dr. Randolph laid the card in Joy's lap.

"Keep it, if you like," he said, "I know it too well ever to forget it. And now," he said, as he

arose, "I am afraid, if I keep you here longer, I shall have to treat you as my patient, and that will not suit me at all. Only you must let me presume upon my privilege, as an old friend as well as physician, and charge you to remember this: God lays no burden upon us that will not, if we bear it patiently, prove some day to have been weighted with blessings."

CHAPTER XXII.

PROVED FAITHFUL.

“When obstacles and trials seem
Like prison-walls to be,
I do the little I can do,
And leave the rest to thee.”

—*Faber.*

JOY parted from Dr. Randolph at Mrs. Queen's door that night, feeling strengthened and encouraged. Dr. Randolph's sympathy was much to her, but his kind words of counsel were still more. Her lonely life no longer seemed unendurable now that she realized that anxious forebodings for the morrow, and mournful glances backward to yesterday, ought to have no part in her Christian life. Now that she saw the cause of her unhappiness she saw also how she could overcome it, and from that hour she turned her face towards the light, and bravely sought to gather up and rejoice in every sunbeam that fell across her path. She was soon surprised to see how many more sunbeams there were than shadows, and how much there was, in even her lonely life, for which she had cause to be thankful.

The days and weeks passed very peacefully now. She had little trouble with Edith, and she no longer resented Mrs. Queen's and Miss Dora's haughty treatment, but passed it by without notice, and soon without thought. It is sometimes much easier to live above a trouble than it is to live it down. We may not be able to change the outward circumstances of our lives, but in the midst of many vexations and trials, we can have an inward peace, and a sweet contentment with God's appointments for us, that will lift us above all disappointments, and discouragements, and make the very things we count our hindrances our greatest helps. So Joy was learning now.

She heard from her father often, and his letters, like his experiences, were at one time hopeful and at another time gloomy and discouraging. But he was well, and as long as he could write her that assurance, Joy felt that she could be true to her motto and give thanks.

The last of June the family went to a lovely country home on the lakeshore, and now, for Joy and her little pupil, there were long walks along the lake, and through the woods, and over the prairies after wild flowers. Though Joy saw little of Mrs. Queen and Miss Dora, and the gay friends who gathered about them, and had no society save Edith's, she was cheerful and contented.

“If I could see the end from the beginning, as

God sees it," she thought, "I should thank him for what he withholds, as much as for what he bestows;" and as she cherished that sweet faith her life became all sunshine.

So passed the summer, until the middle of August, when Mrs. Queen and Miss Dora decided to join a party of friends and visit the Yellowstone and California.

"Edith is so well, and is doing so finely under your care, Miss Stanmore," Mrs. Queen said, graciously, "that I know I can leave her with you, here in the country, without any anxiety. You will do by her, in all respects, as if she belonged to you, I am confident, and if she should be ill you must send for Dr. Randolph. I will see him before I leave and tell him that I have appointed him Edith's guardian." Having made this arrangement, Mrs. Queen, without any misgivings, departed on her pleasure excursion.

For a week or so after her departure all went well, but then one evening Edith began to complain of a sore throat. Joy trusted that it was nothing serious, and after administering some simple remedy she put the little girl to bed, believing that sleep would prove to be all the physician she needed. But the next morning she was plainly no better, but on the contrary growing worse, and in some alarm Joy telegraphed for Dr. Randolph.

He came by the first train after receiving her telegram, and went at once to the room where Edith was fretfully crying with pain, while Joy, with patient tenderness, was trying to soothe her.

Without any questions the doctor examined the child, and then turned to Joy.

"Miss Stanmore," he said, "will you tell the housekeeper I would like to see her?" As Joy started on her errand, he added, in a tone of quiet command: "Please remain down-stairs in the parlor until I come to you."

In some surprise Joy obeyed him. The time before he came seemed very long, and when he appeared his face and voice seemed to her not only grave but stern.

"How is Edith?" she asked, anxiously.

"I left her sleeping," he answered, evasively.

"Miss Stanmore," he asked, after a moment's silence, "will you promise to obey me, as a physician, in everything I may deem it advisable to order now?"

Joy looked at him in surprise. "Certainly," she answered. "I will do whatever you order done for Edith, Dr. Randolph. I will watch and nurse her faithfully, and follow your directions to the very letter."

Dr. Randolph's face lost none of its gravity. He waited a second, and then asked: "Have you ever had scarlet fever?"

Joy started nervously. "No," she answered. "I never have. Is that what ails Edith?"

"I have reason to think so," the doctor said, "and I fear also that there is a slight tendency to diphtheria. Miss Stanmore, I want you to promise me that you will not enter Edith's room again until I give you permission. The child shall be well cared for," Dr. Randolph continued, hurriedly, as Joy attempted to speak. "Mrs. Dunsmore is old and experienced. She has no fear of the disease, and I do not fear it for her. She will watch Edith until I am able to procure a well-trained professional nurse. I am going now to the city to look for one. All I am waiting for is your promise. You will give it to me," he concluded, in a tone of firm command.

"I cannot," Joy said, quietly.

"Why not?" Dr. Randolph demanded.

Joy looked at him, and her face, though pale, was calm and resolved.

"Edith was left in my care, Dr. Randolph," she answered. "Her mother trusted her to me, and a trust is a sacred thing."

"Then I wish," Dr. Randolph said, with some impatience, "that I had asked Mr. Stanmore to trust me to take care of you. Then I should know what to do now."

"Papa trusted me in God's care," Joy said, quietly.

“And do you not know that the very fact that God does care for us forbids our running into needless danger?” Dr. Randolph asked now.

“But this is not a needless danger,” Joy insisted. “It is my duty to remain with Edith.”

“I do not think so,” the doctor answered, with sternness. “It is your duty now to do as I, the physician in charge of this case, advise. But if you will not obey me as a physician, perhaps you will listen when I beg you, as a friend, to be guided by me. Remember,” and his stern voice softened now, “remember your father, remember—all who love you. You have no right to run this great risk and cause them—perhaps a life-long sorrow.”

Joy trembled, and for a few moments covered her face with her hands. Dr. Randolph watched her anxiously, but when she looked at him again he saw that she was firm in her resolve.

“Dr. Randolph,” she said, and there was no tremor in her voice now, “I am in God’s hands, and I know, whatever happens, I shall be safe. I cannot leave Edith. No one else can control her as I can. She will do for me, without a word, what she would not do for any one else without a struggle. She will take medicine willingly from me that a stranger could hardly force her to take. I know I am needed in her sick-room, and where I am needed, I ought to be, and—must be.”

Dr. Randolph turned from her and walked rapidly up and down the room.

"I will not allow you to do this thing!" he exclaimed, suddenly, in a sharp, stern voice: but before he could say more, the door opened and the housekeeper herself appeared.

"Miss Stanmore," she said, hastily, without noticing the doctor, "if you can do anything with Edith I wish you would come. She will not take her medicine, and I can neither coax nor force her to obey me."

Joy looked at Dr. Randolph. "I must go," she said, and without another word she left the room.

Long days, full of anxious watching, succeeded one another now. Telegrams were sent in pursuit of Mrs. Queen, but she was winging her way, in tourist fashion, from one point to another, and they failed to reach her. Dr. Randolph secured a good nurse, but Edith, who was as wilful and rebellious when ill as she was when well, would take her medicine and nourishment from no one but Joy, and would cry for her whenever she left the room. And so through the long days, and longer nights, Joy watched with patient and loving care beside her.

Dr. Randolph came daily, and did all his skill could suggest to shield Joy from the disease; he watched her closely, but said little, and Joy felt

sometimes that he could not forgive her for disobeying his command.

They were very dark days through which the young girl passed now, but her trust in the hands that were guiding and guarding her remained unshaken, and more than once, with tremulous but grateful lips, she whispered to herself: "I do give thanks that God's promise is not a reed to break in time of trial, but a rock that stands firm through every tempest: and they who trust his word will always find that as their days, so shall their strength be."

Ten days after Edith was taken ill there came a fearful night. Dr. Randolph was in the city, and Joy and the nurse were watching alone.

"She will not live until morning," the nurse, taught by long experience, prophesied as Edith's paroxysms of suffering grew sharper.

Joy trembled as she watched, and realized how helpless were human means unless God, in his mercy, followed them with his blessing. She felt her own weakness more keenly than ever before, but at the same time she seemed to feel, as never before, the all-sufficiency of the great Physician.

Even as faith trusted, and love prayed, the trial moment came. How she did it Joy never could tell; a hand, in whose grasp she seemed but an instrument, seemed to guide her, and as Edith struggled and choked in agony, she grasped her in

her arms, and by some strange, dexterous movement, which she could never explain, succeeded in giving her relief.

It was the terrible, crucial moment in the dread disease, and when, at an early hour the next morning, Dr. Randolph came, Edith was better.

He listened without a word while the nurse related the experiences of that trying night, but when all was told he turned to Joy.

"You were inspired, I think," he said, with a gentleness that was almost reverential. "You have saved her life."

The reaction that followed the fearful strain she had endured had left Joy very weak, but as she heard those words she felt that, even though it caused suffering, there was a blessedness in unselfishness, and that the comfort and safety of a selfish life were not to be compared with the rich compensations that are granted to self-denial.

CHAPTER XXIII.

WELL REWARDED.

“Wouldst thou go forth to bless? be sure of thine own ground.
Fix well thy centre first; then draw thy circle round.”

—*French.*

EDITH'S recovery, though sure, was very tedious, and the strict quarantine that Dr. Randolph enforced was very trying for both the little invalid and her patient nurse. Mrs. Queen returned to the city the day after the crisis, but her fear of the disease for herself and Dora was great; and comforted by the doctor's assurance that Edith was doing well, she remained in her town house and contented herself with sending letters and playthings to her little daughter.

The professional nurse soon left, and Dr. Randolph's visits grew less frequent; for several weeks Joy and Edith were left with the servants alone in the cottage.

September passed, and October came, and one chilly and rainy morning Joy and her little charge were alone in the parlor, when, without warning, the door opened and Dr. Randolph walked in.

“You look very comfortable,” he said, pleas-

antly, as he went to the hearth, on which a cheerful fire was burning, and stood before it watching, with eyes at once professional and friendly, Joy and his little patient.

"I am glad we look comfortable," Joy answered, "but we feel very much like Robinson Crusoe on his island, before he found Friday."

"As if you were quite isolated from the rest of the world?" the doctor asked, with a smile. "Well, the isolation will not last much longer. And," he continued, as he dropped his playful tone and spoke in a grave though gentle voice, "I do not think—do you—that this rest, apart in a desert place, has been for you unfruitful in blessing?"

"No," Joy said, a little shyly, "I know every hour of it has been good for me. I am sure now that when God sends trials to his children he sends strength to endure them."

"Yes," Dr. Randolph said, gently, "and the experience that has taught you the lesson would be precious at any cost. It is a great step heavenward when we have learned to use that old word, 'sure,' in speaking of God's promises to his children."

"Dr. Randolph," Edith broke in now, "when am I going home?"

"Suppose I should say to-morrow," he answered, "what would you do?"

"Begin to pack," Edith replied, promptly.

"Sensible and eminently practical little maiden," Dr. Randolph said, playfully, "that is just what I came to give you permission to do. To-morrow—if the elements are propitious—you are to return to the city. Do you think," and he looked at Joy, "that you will feel then like holding a reception?"

"That will depend upon who would attend it," she answered, with a smile.

"Very non-committal, and also wisely designed to tempt me to tell you all I know," the doctor answered. "But I am not a woman, and consequently I can keep a secret. You are to leave here to-morrow: that is quite enough for you to know to-day." And having imparted that satisfactory information the doctor went off.

The next day was a lovely successor of the one, "so calm, and fair, and bright," of which George Herbert sang so long ago; and before it closed Edith and Joy, to their great satisfaction, were comfortably settled in their city home.

The welcome they received was a very warm one. Dora, who though selfish was far from heartless, showered them with tears, and Mrs. Queen was for the time thawed out of the ice in which she was usually incased, and thanked Joy with grateful sincerity for her care of her child.

"I owe her life to your faithfulness," she said,

“and now I never can think of you except as a very dear member of my family. Henceforth you will, I hope, be with us and of us at all times and in all places. You and Dora are nearly of an age, and you ought to be good friends.”

Mrs. Queen’s gracious words reminded Joy of one of Aunt Letty’s quaint sayings: “There is many an ‘ought to be,’ that never gets conjugated with ‘am,’ ‘is,’ or ‘are,’ in the present tense of the indicative mood.” But friendship is one of the sweetest gifts this world can offer us; and, even while she felt that intimacy between Miss Dora and herself was almost as impossible as harmony from discordant chords, Joy was deeply grateful for Mrs. Queen’s kindness, and resolved to do all in her power to make “are” take the place of “ought to be.”

She expected at once to resume her usual school duties, but Dr. Randolph appeared the next morning, and after a short interview with him Mrs. Queen sent for Joy.

“Miss Stanmore,” she said, kindly, “the doctor thinks it will be best not to subject Edith to the restraint of the school-room for a week or two yet, and he also says that you need rest and a complete change, and I have promised that we will be guided by him.”

“Then, what am I to do for a change?” Joy asked, in some surprise.

"I suppose the doctor will tell you," Mrs. Queen answered. "He wishes to see you in the library."

"Are you ready for the reception I promised you?" Dr. Randolph asked, when a few minutes later Joy came to him.

"I don't know," Joy answered, doubtfully.

"Then—for once—if you will pardon me, I will venture to judge for you," the doctor said, in a happy voice. And going to the door that connected the library with the parlor he opened it and admitted a lady.

"I do not believe you need an introduction," he said, and Joy looked up to meet a tender smile, and feel the pressure of loving lips; while a voice she had never forgotten said, fondly,

"My dear little gossip, do you know how glad I am to see you once more?"

"What do you think you are to do now?" the doctor asked, when the excitement of that first meeting between Joy and his sister had somewhat subsided.

"After what Mrs. Queen has just told me I suppose I am to receive orders," Joy answered, demurely.

"Allow me to suggest that you say, 'obey orders,'" Dr. Randolph said, with a smile. "You need not be afraid to do so. I am not going to give you any commands—this time—that can conflict

with your duty, and I trust you will not feel that they can interfere with your pleasure."

Mrs. Maynard smiled, as she watched Joy's puzzled face. "I will not allow you to tease her any longer, King," she said. "My dear," and she laid her hand on Joy's, "we only want to take you home with us for a little visit. I am anxious—after all these years—to become well acquainted with you again. Will you let me?"

Joy was as ready now, as when she was a child, to accede to Mrs. Maynard's wishes, and two hours later she found herself relieved of all care, and enjoying a pleasant rest—that she needed more than she was aware of—in Dr. Randolph's beautiful home, over which his sister was now presiding.

Mrs. Maynard was little changed from the Miss Randolph who had so completely won Joy's childish affection. She was happily married; but, though her husband and two lovely children were the pride and delight of her heart, her sympathies were not narrowed to the four walls of her own home. She was still the faithful, unselfish friend that Joy so well remembered, and no appeal for sympathy was ever made to her in vain. Her husband's business still detained him in China; but for the sake of her children she had returned to America, and now, until Mr. Maynard could join her, her home was to be with her brother, and, as Dr. Randolph said, with equal gladness and

affection, they had taken the old life up where they laid it down eight years before.

"I have invited Miss Dora, and an acquaintance I met in China, to spend this evening with us," Mrs. Maynard said, the second morning of Joy's visit. "I could not help it, King," she added, as she saw the expression that for an instant crossed Dr. Randolph's face. "You know, yourself, that hospitality is sometimes a duty as well as a pleasure."

"To whom do you owe this duty now--to Miss Queen?" the doctor asked.

"No, to the young man. I met him in China, where he seemed to be one of those aimless travellers, we sometimes meet, who float with the tide, like driftwood, from shore to shore. There seemed to be little purpose or high ambition in his life, but yet there was something attractive in his pleasant, genial nature, and I liked and pitied him, and he often visited at our house. Now, that he is in Chicago, and has taken pains to call upon me, I feel that a little attention from us may give him pleasure, and, perhaps, do him good."

"Very well," Dr. Randolph said, pleasantly. "You are right, as always, Queen Bess, and it is pure, unadulterated selfishness, that makes me feel that our circle, as it is, is complete. I suppose," he added, after a moment's thought, in which he seemed to have decided some question in

his own mind, "I suppose—though we may not always find it particularly pleasant—it is always best for God's children to make their circles as wide and all-embracing as they can."

"Why?" Joy asked.

"For the sake of the influence for good we may thus be enabled to exert," he answered, gravely, "and because we are none of us meant to live in or for ourselves."

Joy had led a secluded life so long that she was inclined to shrink from strangers, and she was conscious now of feeling secretly unwilling to meet Mrs. Maynard's guests. But Dr. Randolph's words, reminding her as they did that she was to find her own happiness "by forgetting it in ministry to others," proved just the little sermon that she needed.

She was standing near Dr. Randolph that evening, when Mrs. Maynard came to her to introduce her friend from China. As he heard her name the young man gave her a quick look, and then asked, in an amused voice, "Pray, Miss Stanmore, can you tell me,

" 'How does the water
Come down at Lodore?' "

Joy had already recognized her old Spring Valley friend, and with a bright smile she answered, gayly :

“‘All at once, and all o’er, with a mighty uproar,
And this way the water comes down at Lodore.’”

“Then you do remember?” Walter Gifford said, with pleasure. “Please tell me, have you gone on reading books as rapidly as you used to read them in Spring Valley?”

“I have read a few,” she answered, demurely.

“What a library of useful information you must be by this time!” he returned. “Do you know—” and Mr. Gifford turned to Mrs. Maynard, who was listening, in much surprise, to the conversation between Joy and himself—“I owe the little taste I have for books almost entirely to Miss Stanmore.”

“She must have begun to teach at a very early age,” Miss Queen, who stood near, said now.

“Yes, I was a child and she was a child,” he returned, gayly. “But her teaching did me good while it lasted: the only trouble was that it was too soon over to make any lasting impression.”

“How is Mrs. Gifford?” Joy asked, now.

He gave her a changed, pained look. “Do you not know?” he answered, in a saddened voice. “She died three years ago.”

Joy was touched, and her voice was full of sympathy, as she said: “I am very sorry for you. I owe a great deal to your mother. I never shall forget her.”

Mrs. Maynard interposed now. “Mr. Gifford,”

she said, "my little girls are very anxious to renew their acquaintance with you." And much to Joy's relief she led him away.

"What did Mrs. Gifford do for you?" Dr. Randolph, who had been an interested listener, asked now.

"Gave me the privilege of reading to her, and then paid me for doing so," Joy said, frankly.

Dr. Randolph looked a little dissatisfied, but he did not speak, and, with a little laugh, Miss Queen said: "What a curious experience for a child that must have been."

"At least it was a pleasant experience," Joy answered, gravely.

"I wonder," Miss Queen said, as she regarded her with a serious and peculiar expression, "if there has ever been anything in your life that you would call an unpleasant experience, Miss Stanmore."

"Perhaps not in the retrospect," Joy said, quietly. "A backward glance is apt to reveal most of our experiences in their true colors and meanings, I think."

"Does that make them always pleasant?" Miss Queen asked.

"It does at least make them intelligible," Dr. Randolph quietly remarked now, "and,

"‘They, who God’s plan can understand,
Feel not the pressure of his hand.’”

“Well,” Miss Queen said, in a troubled voice, “now, I would like to ask one question more: Does the fact that you can understand the meaning of many of God’s dealings with you, make you better satisfied with yourself?” She looked at Dr. Randolph, but he turned to Joy.

“Let us hear Miss Stanmore’s answer,” he said, gravely.

Joy’s face flushed. It was not easy for her to answer such a question, but they were waiting for her words, and in a low voice she said:

“I think it often makes us sad, and ashamed for ourselves, because we see how we have murmured about what was sent to us in blessing, but,” with a glad little ring in her voice, “it does make us satisfied with God.”

Joy did not see the sudden light that shone in Dr. Randolph’s eyes, but Miss Queen did.

“Dr. Randolph,” she said, “don’t you sometimes wonder how, or through what influences, Miss Stanmore grew to what she is?”

“Would you like to know?” he asked, and though he smiled there was a tone in his voice that told of deep feeling. “I am sorry that for eight years I have known nothing of Miss Stanmore’s life, but I found the other day a little poem, by Charles Mackay, that said many things to me, and perhaps it will to you. Would you like to hear it?” And with a glance at Joy that seemed

almost to beg her pardon, Dr. Randolph slowly repeated :

“ An ivy in a dungeon grew,
Unfed by rain, uncheered by dew.
Its pallid leaflets only drank
Cave moisture foul, or odors dank.

“ But through the dungeon grating high
There fell a sunbeam from the sky,
It slept upon the grateful floor
In silent gladness evermore.

“ The ivy felt a tremor shoot
Through all its fibres to the root,
It felt the light, it saw the ray,
It longed to blossom into day.

“ It grew, it crept, it pushed, it clomb,
Long had the darkness been its home :
For well it knew, though veiled in night,
The goodness and the joy of light.

“ It reached the beam, it thrilled, it curled,
It blessed the warmth that cheers the world ;
It grew towards the dungeon bars,
It looked upon the moon and stars.

“ Upon that solitary place
Its verdure threw adorning grace ;
The mating birds became its guests,
And sang its praises from their nests.

“ By rains, and dews, and sunshine fed,
Upon the outer wall it spread,
And in the day-beam, roaming free,
It grew into a stately tree.

“Wouldst know the moral of the rhyme?
Behold the heavenly light, and climb.
To every dungeon comes a ray
Of God’s illimitable day.”

Long before the low recitation ceased Joy had turned away her face, but Miss Queen listened with close and earnest attention.

“I know very well now what you think,” she said in a low voice to the doctor; but then she turned to Joy.

“Miss Stanmore,” she asked, “is that your secret?”

“What do you mean, Miss Dora?” Joy looked round as she spoke, and revealed a flushed and humble face and eyes that shone through a tender mist.

“This: do you ‘Behold the heavenly light, and climb?’”

“I try to, by the aid of many helpers,” Joy softly answered.

“Then,” Miss Queen whispered, as she came nearer to Joy, while Dr. Randolph moved away, “I wish you would help me. I am in earnest,” she insisted, as Joy looked at her a little uncertain of her meaning. “I am tired of being cold and proud and selfish. I have seen the beauty of the opposite character, as you have shown it to me. Now will you help me to find the better way?”

With a glad heart Joy promised her help; and

when in after years Dora Queen was known as a noble woman, whose far-reaching influence blessed wherever it was felt, none rejoiced more truly than did her old friend Joy ; though, in her sweet humility, she never in this world realized how much that transformed character was due to her example.

CHAPTER XXIV.

WORDS AND DEEDS.

“High endeavors are an inward light
That make the path before him always bright.”
— *Wordsworth.*

JOY'S week with Mrs. Maynard was no exception to the usual rule, that pleasant days pass quickly. It was a beautiful break in her quiet life, and at its close, invigorated in both body and mind, she returned to Mrs. Queen's. She found her life there changed in many respects. Edith was her devoted and obedient little follower, Dora sought her society, and Mrs. Queen seemed as anxious now to draw her out of her seclusion as she had formerly been to keep her in retirement. She was urged now to meet the visitors, who were constantly coming and going, and she saw much of Walter Gifford, who soon fell into what he called a pleasant habit of calling frequently at Mrs. Queen's.

He was bright and agreeable, and always a welcome addition to every social gathering; but before they had met many times Joy decided that he was as ease-loving and self-indulgent as he had

been when a boy ; and occasionally she detected an irreverent and skeptical tone in his conversation that pained and shocked her.

“Did you ever hear of the giant, who confines his captives in dark caves where their sight is slowly but surely destroyed?” she asked him once, after listening to one of his witty but irreverent speeches.

“No,” he answered, laughingly. “I have—I flatter myself—quite an extensive acquaintance, but I have never yet had the honor of an introduction to that celebrity. Pray tell me about him.”

“His name is Giant Doubt,” Joy said, quietly, “and I thought you seemed to know him well.”

He winced a little, but with a forced laugh he said, “You must not judge me by my words, Miss Stanmore. You remember the old adage, ‘Say well is good, but do well is better.’”

“Very well,” she said, so pleasantly that he could not take offence, “since you are to be judged by your deeds, pray what have you done with your life?”

Walter Gifford looked at her with a graver face than he usually wore. “I have done nothing, but please myself—I suppose I must own that,” he said, frankly. “But then”—he insisted—“I think I may plead that there have been extenuating circumstances. Imagine a young man, with-

out parents, or brothers, or sisters, or any near ties of relationship, and possessed of plenty of money. What would you expect of him?"

"That he would try to please God," Joy gently answered.

Walter Gifford arose, and, after walking up and down the room once or twice, came and stood before her. "I wish you would allow me to try to please you," he said, earnestly.

Joy was startled, but she quickly regained her self-possession. "No," she said, in a calm voice, "do not say that. I do not desire to be better pleased—but for your mother's sake, I wish you would try to be all that she hoped and prayed you might become."

"You remember my mother well," he said, in a voice touched with tender memories, "and I wish you would tell me just what you think she desired me to be."

"Don't you remember the day when we had been reading Tennyson's 'Morte D'Arthur,' and she said there were four things she wanted for you—that you should be courteous, courageous, charitable, and Christian. Do you think"—and the young girl's voice grew very gentle and low—"that if she were here now, she would be quite satisfied?"

Walter Gifford did not answer immediately. He was touched by Joy's allusion to his mother,

but at the same time her words—that, gentle as they were, told him plainly how she had weighed him and found him wanting—vexed and wounded him.

“I may not be a king in courtesy, nor a lion in courage, nor a saint in charity,” he said, presently, as he turned to leave the room, “but at least I do claim to be quite as good as other men; as true, and brave, and generous, as even—Dr. Randolph,” he concluded, with a scornful emphasis on his last words.

“I have made a mistake, I fear,” Joy said sadly to herself, “and yet how could I—who claim to be a Christian—hear him speak irreverently, and not show him that I disapproved?”

A few days after this conversation Mrs. Queen's family, with Mrs. Maynard, Dr. Randolph, and Mr. Gifford were waiting at a railroad station for the train on which they were to return to the city, after a pleasant excursion into the country. Among the large number of travellers who were waiting at the station was a lady with a little girl. The child was an attractive little creature of six, whose interest, for the moment, was all centered in a rubber ball, that she rolled, with a great satisfaction to herself and some annoyance to those standing near, up and down the platform. Suddenly she gave the ball a hit that sent it off the platform and on to the track, just as the engine's whistle

announced the near approach of the train. Another second, and the child was on the track, in pursuit of her toy, and the swift engine was rushing rapidly upon her. It seemed too late to save her, and strong men and shrinking women turned in horror from the fearful sight.

Dr. Randolph and Mr. Gifford, with Joy and Miss Queen were standing together a little apart from the crowd. As they saw the little one's danger, Walter Gifford uttered an exclamation of horror and turned away, but even as he did so Dr. Randolph had leaped upon the track, seized the child—who was still unconscious of her danger—and sprung upon the pilot of the locomotive that was even then upon them.*

It was all over in a minute, and, while cheer after cheer went up from the crowd on the platform, the train rolled on to its stopping place a little farther along. When it halted Dr. Randolph returned, and quietly, and without any appearance of having done anything remarkable, restored the little child, frightened, but perfectly safe, to her mother.

“That was a brave thing for a man to do,” said a lady who was standing near Joy and Mr. Gifford, “and I doubt if there was another man on this platform who would have dared to do it.”

* This incident actually occurred.

Walter Gifford heard her, and glanced at Joy. She was pale, but there was a proud look on her face, more eloquent than words. He felt humiliated: he could not join in the cheers that were still rising for the doctor, but he stooped and said in a voice that only Joy could hear, "I recall my words; I am not as brave as Dr. Randolph."

The little party of friends were very quiet on their homeward ride, but when at Mrs. Queen's door Dr. Randolph bade Joy good-night, she raised her eyes to his, and said, softly, "I was saying my motto all the way home."

"Miss Stanmore," Mr. Gifford asked the next time he saw Joy alone, "don't you think physical courage depends chiefly upon the temperament?"

"Perhaps so," Joy said, "but I think our temperament is influenced, more than we usually suppose, by our faith as Christians."

"And you also consider a Christian the most perfect type of a man, do you not?"

Joy looked at him with a flushed face. "I should be sorry if you were really in any doubt about my answer to that question," she said, gravely.

"You need not be sorry. I am in no doubt," he returned, with a gravity equal to her own.

"Miss Stanmore," he said, after a pause, "do you know that since the night I met you at Mrs. Maynard's you have taught me many lessons?"

She smiled a little. "I was not conscious that I was teaching any one but Edith," she said, pleasantly.

"Consciously or unconsciously, you have been teaching me," he replied. "Since my mother left me, no one has influenced me for good as you have."

"I am glad," Joy said, in a voice that verified her words. "I owe so much to your mother, Mr. Gifford, that I would do anything I could for you."

"There is one thing you would not do, and that I shall never ask of you," he returned, sadly. "But I am going away from Chicago to-morrow, and it is doubtful if I ever return here. Before I go I want to tell you—I feel that I owe it to you to tell you—that if I ever become a Christian it will be through your influence."

"Mine!" Joy said, humbly, and with moist eyes.

"Yes, yours. You have a high standard, and you have been true to it. When you reproved me for irreverence you did what no other young girl, and I have known many who professed to be Christians, ever dared to do. Even while it made me angry, I admired and respected you for doing it. It set me to thinking, and I have been thinking ever since. I believe," he added, in a lighter tone, as if he dared not suffer himself to say all he

felt, "that if there were more women like you the millennium would come sooner."

"Don't," Joy pleaded, humbly, "don't think better of me than I deserve. But," she whispered, as he wrung her hand at parting, "there is One whom you cannot honor too highly, and I pray that you may become his disciple."

That evening, when just at twilight Joy ran for a few minutes into Mrs. Maynard's, she found her sitting with her brother in the pleasant fire-lighted library.

"Did you come because your ears were burning?" Mrs. Maynard asked, playfully. "We were just speaking of you, my dear. Did a bird in the air tell you so?"

"No," Joy answered, with a happy laugh, "but now, that you have excited my curiosity, aren't you going to tell me what you were saying?"

"No, not a word," Dr. Randolph said, with much decision.

Mrs. Maynard smiled. "Do you know that Mr. Gifford has left for New York?" she asked in a moment.

"Yes," Joy answered, demurely.

"He called here this afternoon," Mrs. Maynard continued, "and since then, my dear, I have been considering seriously this question: What is the greatest talent we can possess?"

"Well, what is?" Joy asked, with interest, as

Mrs. Maynard paused, without giving the result of her consideration.

“I was half inclined at first to think it was beauty,” Mrs. Maynard said, with a smile, as she watched Joy’s face that looked very fair and sweet in the fire-light, “but I referred the question to Kingman as, perhaps, the better judge, and now we will let him answer.”

The old play and sparkle were in Dr. Randolph’s eyes, but his tone was very thoughtful as he said:

“I think the talent we slight the most, and are, perhaps, the most responsible for, is influence. We cannot by any effort make ourselves beautiful; we cannot always, even when we possess them, cultivate our gifts for music and painting; and not many of us are blessed with ‘thoughts of gold’ that we can express in ‘speech of silver.’ But we can all exert, if we will, the charm of a winning manner; we can all speak truthfully with loving lips, and we can all perform unselfishly the little deeds of kindness that make this earth like Eden. Wherever we go, and whatever we are, we can carry with us an influence that will ennoble those we meet, and honor the Master we serve. And so I think,” and Dr. Randolph’s smile, as his eyes met Joy’s, seemed bright with some secret knowledge, “that a Christian’s silent influence is his greatest talent.”

CHAPTER XXV.

SATISFIED.

“ Surely, at last, far off, some time, somewhere,
The veil would lift for his deep-searching eyes :
The road would open for his painful feet ;
That should be won for which he lost the world.”

—*Edwin Arnold.*

THROUGH the summer, that had been in many respects such an eventful one in Joy's life, Mr. Stanmore had been travelling through the remote West. How well he was succeeding Joy did not know, but in his last letter, written from San Francisco, he mentioned having just seen Mr. Rothmer, and taught by the experiences of her childhood Joy felt that a meeting with Mr. Rothmer was a sure augury of good.

She was thinking of her father one afternoon when she heard Edith's little feet pattering through the hall, and the next moment her door was opened and the little girl called, excitedly :

“ See what I've brought you, Miss Joy ! ”

Joy turned quickly, and to her surprise and delight saw Mr. Stanmore standing in her room.

He was well, one glance told her that, and his

first words assured her that hope was once more in the ascendant. "Well, my little girl," he asked, soon, "have you had enough of governessing?"

"I am not tired of it," Joy answered, cheerfully.

He smiled in his old happy way. "You have a rare gift for making a pleasure of a necessity," he said; "but, my dear, I am glad to tell you that the necessity no longer exists."

"What—then?" Joy asked, incoherently.

"Whatever you like," Mr. Stanmore returned, while he watched her with smiling eyes.

Joy was puzzled. "Papa," she said, "do you mean"—she stopped and changed the form of her question. "What do you mean, papa?" she asked, earnestly.

"Well, several things," Mr. Stanmore answered. "In the first place, my darling, though I haven't discovered a gold mine, I have done what will, for us, answer quite as well. I have sold my patent for a sum that, if it does not make me a millionaire, does at least make me very comfortable. Then, through Mr. Rothmer's assistance, I have engaged in an excellent business, of which there is a branch in this city, that I am to take charge of; and lastly, I have come back, my little daughter, to take you once more into my own hands. You have proved that you can bear adversity; now we will see if you can endure pros-

perity." Then, with a heart full of glad thanksgiving, Richard Stanmore again folded his child in his arms.

"And now," Mr. Stanmore said, a little later, in a changed and sober voice, "I have something else to tell you, my child—something that will cause you pain; but what I was charged to tell you, you must not sorrow over as those that have no hope."

"What is it?" Joy whispered, with a sickening dread of some impending evil.

"I did not return from San Francisco alone," Mr. Stanmore said, gently. "Our friends, Mr. and Mrs. Rothmer, came with me."

He paused, and Joy waited breathlessly for his next words.

"Mr. Rothmer is very ill," Mr. Stanmore slowly continued; "his disease is incurable, and when he was told so by the physicians he insisted upon returning to the East. He said"—and Mr. Stanmore's voice was broken now—"that an own child could scarcely be dearer to him than my little girl, and he wished to see her once more before he went home."

"Where is he?" Joy asked, through bitter-sweet tears.

"I left him at the hotel. Before I came to you I summoned Dr. Randolph. There is no immediate danger," Mr. Stanmore continued to ex-

plain. "He may be spared to us for days—perhaps weeks—but the end is surely near, and it is his and Mrs. Rothmer's wish that you should come to them, and remain with them until"—a sob choked Mr. Stanmore's voice, his sentence remained unfinished, and Joy asked no more questions.

Her simple arrangements for leaving Mrs. Queen were soon completed, and that very afternoon she joined her dear old friends at the hotel.

Mr. Rothmer was as calm, and brave, and cheerful, as if he were only contemplating a summer voyage across some peaceful sea.

"I am only going home, my child," he said, tenderly, as he saw Joy's sorrowful face, "and home, to the home-sick, means the fulfilment of every wish."

Very quietly, peacefully, and even brightly the autumn days went by in Mr. Rothmer's sick-room. Dr. Randolph came daily, bringing not only his skill but his firm faith to aid the sufferer, and Mrs. Rothmer and Joy were ever near to minister with loving thoughtfulness to his comfort.

There was little real suffering while, as if tender, invisible hands were drawing him, he moved daily nearer to the gates of the city whose name is Peace.

Calmly and methodically he attended to all his affairs. Much of the great wealth he had accumu-

lated was set apart for his Master's service, and directed into the channels that would, he thought, perform that service best.

"My little girl," he said, one fair and peaceful November day, "I am going to leave you—in token of my love—two legacies."

Tears sprung to Joy's eyes. "Don't speak so," she said, impulsively.

He checked her with a smile, so peaceful and happy, that she felt that tears and sad words, in his presence, were out of place.

"You do not ask me what they are," he said, gently, "but you must let me tell you now, for"—with a little pause—"I may not have a better time. One"—and his voice grew very tender—"is Mrs. Rothmer. I trust her to your love. You will comfort her in her loneliness," he whispered, pleadingly.

"All I can—as far as I can," Joy promised, with trembling lips.

"That will be very far," he said, tenderly. "Then, there is one thing more, my little girl"—and as he spoke he laid his hand fondly on Joy's head—"I have set apart two sums of money. One is for your own use. Whatever may come to you in the coming years, it is a pleasure to me now to shield you—so far as I have power—from possible want. I have done for you as I would if you were my own child. I hope"—he

added, softly—"that it will be a comfort to you in the future to know that you were very dear to me."

"It will be—and it is now," Joy whispered, while by a strong effort she stifled the sobs that were choking her.

"The other sum," Mr. Rothmer went on, with a happy smile, "is in memory of the little girl who wanted me to study the 'between places.' I have set it apart to be used solely—in whatever way, as time advances, may seem best—for spreading a knowledge of the Prince of Peace among my own people. They will be gathered in some day"—he said, with a far-away prophetic light in his face—"the promise is sure, and Jehovah's time is best. But until that last glad feast of the ingathering comes, we must wait and work. I have done what I could, and now in your hands I trust the work I must resign. You will be faithful to that trust, I know," he whispered. And kneeling beside him Joy solemnly promised that she would hold it sacred.

A few more days went by with solemn gladness in that chamber of peace, and then one afternoon when Dr. Randolph called he found Mr. Rothmer sitting in an easy-chair before a window, watching the western sky where a clear, golden, autumnal sunset was glowing with solemn glory. Joy and Mrs. Rothmer were present, and as Dr. Randolph

entered, his experienced eyes saw at once that the sunset of life had come.

Mr. Rothmer smiled as he approached him. "The gates are almost open," he said, as his eyes turned again toward the sunset; "there should be music now—won't you sing?"

There was a moment's silence, and then in a clear, sweet tenor Dr. Randolph sang:

"Jerusalem the golden,
When sunset's in the west,
It seems thy gate of glory,
Thou city of the blest."

He waited a moment, while the gates seemed to open slowly, and then sang:

"There is the throne of David,
And there, from toil released,
The shout of them that triumph,
The song of them that feast."

The light on Mr. Rothmer's face grew brighter. "Sing to me of Christ," he whispered. "Let his name be—the last—I hear."

"There Jesus shall embrace us,
There Jesus be embraced."

Dr. Randolph sang softly, and as his voice trembled on the last note Mr. Rothmer spoke.

"It is enough," he said, feebly. "I shall see him—but not here. I shall be—satisfied—when

—I—awake,” and as he uttered that last word he fell asleep.

“Them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him,” Dr. Randolph whispered, reverently. And in that hushed and solemn room there was no loud weeping for the loved one gone: they knew that his home-sick longings were quieted at last, and that in the presence of the Prince of Peace he had entered into rest.

CHAPTER XXVI.

AN ANNIVERSARY.

“Nay, if you come to that, best love of all is God’s.”

—*Robert Browning.*

THE last days of that autumn, with its mingled sweetness and bitterness, were very busy ones for Joy. Mr. Stanmore rented a pleasant and prettily furnished house, and in the excitement of going to housekeeping the young girl found a wholesome relief from sad thoughts and memories. Mrs. Rothmer had promised to make her home with them, but first she had to make a visit in New York.

One bright day, just as autumn was shaking hands with winter, Mr. Stanmore and his daughter took possession of their new home together.

“We must have Aunt Letty here now,” Joy said, when they were quite settled: and very willingly Mr. Stanmore granted her wish and sent for Mrs. Swift.

She arrived one evening just at dusk with the bandbox and umbrella, that were her inseparable travelling companions, in one hand, and in the other a good-sized basket, that she carried as if

its contents were at once very heavy and very valuable.

“Well, here I am,” she said, as she stood in the warm, bright parlor and looked about her with pleased eyes. “I don’t think any more of you now than I always have thought of you, Richard; but I must confess that I am glad to know that you have come at last into possession of that fortune you’ve always been expecting. You found the road to it a pretty long one, I think, but then blessings hardest won are always longest prized, and I have no doubt, Richard, but you will enjoy luxury a great deal more for having been once pretty well acquainted with poverty.”

“Quite true, Aunt Letty,” Mr. Stanmore said, cheerfully; “a bit of blue sky always looks brighter when you contrast it with a dark cloud.”

“Hum—ye—es,” Aunt Letty said, in her dryest tone. “Well, Richard, I must confess that the contrast between now and nine years ago is striking enough to make us all pretty thankful. Joy,” and she offered the basket to the young girl, “there is something I guess you had better take care of.”

“What is it?” Joy asked, curiously.

“Let me take it,” said Dr. Randolph—who had stepped in, as he said, to welcome an old friend. And as he placed the basket on the table and proceeded to untie the cords he asked, playfully :

"Is it animal, vegetable, or mineral, Mrs. Swift?"

"You ought to know, since it's another old friend of yours," Aunt Letty gravely replied.

"Then, of course, it is to be taken out gently and handled with care," Dr. Randolph said. As he spoke he raised the cover of the basket and, to Joy's surprise and amusement, liberated her old friend, Gray-friar.

"Well," Mr. Stanmore said, with a sigh, expressive at once of past troubles and present satisfaction, "I believe now we are, at last, all united in one home."

One pleasant December morning, a few days after Aunt Letty's arrival, Joy received a little note from Mrs. Maynard.

"My dear little gossip," the lady wrote, "I purpose to-day to celebrate an anniversary that Kingman and I have always remembered with peculiar pleasure. My celebration will be a simple affair; in fact, King and I are so sufficient for ourselves and each other that we want no one else save—you. Will you come, my dear, this afternoon, and help us to have a pleasant evening in memory of auld lang syne?"

Dr. Randolph himself brought the note, and while Joy at her desk was writing her answer, he stood near talking with Aunt Letty.

"Are you getting used to your new home, Mrs. Swift?" he inquired, pleasantly.

"You can get used to most things in this world if you try," Aunt Letty replied, wisely. "I ain't

nothin' to say against this home: it's as nice as anything you ain't growed up with can be; but I must confess, I do sometimes feel a little bit homesick for the old days in Spring Valley when Joy was a little girl."

Dr. Randolph's eyes were resting on Joy. "Your gain in those days was our loss, Mrs. Swift," he said, soberly.

"Hum, I don't know about your loss, doctor, but I did sometimes feel afraid that my gain would be Joy's loss," Aunt Letty answered. "Joy," she called the next moment, as if something in her own words had awakened old and long buried memories, "did you ever find out who paid your schooling that six months in Spring Valley?"

"No," Joy answered, carelessly, "the gift satisfied me so completely that I never thought much about the giver. I should be glad, though, to thank that kind friend now if I could," she added, as she offered her note to Dr. Randolph.

He took it quietly, but the sudden light that kindled in his eyes gave her for the first time an intimation of the truth.

"Dr. Randolph," she asked, eagerly, "is that another of the many kindnesses for which I have to thank you?"

"We will see when we balance our credit and debit columns," he answered, lightly, as he took the note and departed.

Joy wondered a good deal that day to what anniversary Mrs. Maynard had referred ; but when she met her that evening, though her welcome was even warmer than usual, Mrs. Maynard gave her no explanation.

At last, when after a busy day Dr. Randolph joined them in the library, the young girl's curiosity prompted her to say :

"You have not told me yet what anniversary you are celebrating, Mrs. Maynard."

"And you cannot guess?" Mrs. Maynard asked, playfully.

"No," Joy answered, with a child's simplicity, "is it one with which I have anything to do?"

Dr. Randolph smiled peculiarly. "Sitting here this evening," he said, "I am irresistibly reminded of the day, nine years ago, when I received a frightened little girl, who was calling for the first time on Miss Bess. Did you ever happen to meet that little girl?" And with the grave face but laughing eyes with which he had watched her nine years before, Dr. Randolph waited now for Joy's answer.

"Was that nine years ago to-day?" she asked, in surprise.

"Yes, nine years ago this very day. Our memories are better than yours, Miss Stanmore."

Joy's face was very sweet as she turned it towards him.

"You remember the date," she said, "but I remember every step of the way since."

"Oh, here is the evening mail!" Mrs. Maynard exclaimed, as at that instant a servant entered with a letter. "And it is from China," she announced, joyfully, as she received it. "Now, King, I must leave you to entertain Joy, while I run off to read papa's letter to the children."

For a few minutes after his sister left the room Dr. Randolph made no attempt to be entertaining. But presently he arose, went to a desk, and soon returned with a picture that he laid in Joy's lap.

"Do you remember that?" he asked.

Joy did not speak at once, for through a haze of sunny memories a lovely child-face seemed to smile upon her, and underneath it was written:

"My little gossip."

She looked at the picture a few moments, and then, with a bright color, she glanced up at Dr. Randolph, who was standing quietly beside her.

"The years have changed me a little," she said, with a smile.

"Yes," he replied, gravely, "they have wrought so many changes that I am no longer satisfied with this picture. I want—the original. Joy," he whispered the next moment, as the girl's bright head drooped, "do you remember your old definition of gossip?—some one God gives us to love. Don't you think he has given us to—each other?"

“Well,” Aunt Letty said, when the next morning Joy blushing revealed her beautiful secret, “well, you will be in safe hands, child, and so I must confess I’m satisfied.”

The human hands, that through all her after years cherished and protected Joy, were indeed safe hands. But while she joyfully trusted them, she rested, with a deeper and a surer faith, in the Hand that through all her life had held her safe and shielded her from harm.

Trials and sorrows came to her, as to all others ; but held in the hollow of that divine Hand she knew, even in life’s fiercest storms, that she was safe, and that every grief that touched her was stamped with love. In shadow, as in sunshine, she whispered her motto ; and as the growing years bore her onward towards eternity she sang, with increasing confidence :

“I’ll bless the Hand that guided,
I’ll bless the Heart that planned,
When throned where glory dwelleth,
In Immanuel’s land.”

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THE END.





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